Tales of Venezuela

Richard Longeville Vowell

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_S0-DUT-425

Tales of Venezuela

Richard Longeville Vowell

BIBLIOBAZAAR

Copyright © BiblioBazaar, LLC

BiblioBazaar Reproduction Series: Our goal at BiblioBazaar is to help readers, educators and researchers by bringing back in print hard-to-find original publications at a reasonable price and, at the same time, preserve the legacy of literary history. The following book represents an authentic reproduction of the text as printed by the original publisher and may contain prior copyright references. While we have attempted to accurately maintain the integrity of the original work(s), from time to time there are problems with the original book scan that may result in minor errors in the reproduction, including imperfections such as missing and blurred pages, poor pictures, markings and other reproduction issues beyond our control. Because this work is culturally important, we have made it available as a part of our commitment to protecting, preserving and promoting the world's literature.

All of our books are in the "public domain" and many are derived from Open Source projects dedicated to digitizing historic literature. We believe that when we undertake the difficult task of re-creating them as attractive, readable and affordable books, we further the mutual goal of sharing these works with a larger audience. A portion of Bibliobazaar profits go back to Open Source projects in the form of a donation to the groups that do this important work around the world. If you would like to make a donation to these worthy Open Source projects, or would just like to get more information about these important initiatives, please visit www.bibliobazaar.com/opensource.

TALES OF VENEZUELA.

PART I.

CONTAINING

THE EARTHQUAKE OF CARACCAS.

> Some books are lies frae end to end,
> And mony a lie has ne'er been pen'd,—
> But this that I am gaun to tell,
> Is just as true's * * * * * * .
>
> *Death and Doctor Hornbook.*

VOL II.

LONDON:
LONGMAN AND CO.
PRINTED BY H. E. CARRINGTON, CHRONICLE OFFICE, BATH.
1831.

THE
EARTHQUAKE OF CARACCAS.

TALE 1.

THE
EARTHQUAKE OF CARACCAS.

CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTORY.—THE NOVICE.

Rebellion ! foul dishonouring word,
  Whose wrongful blight so oft has stain'd
The holiest cause that tongue or sword
  Of mortal ever lost or gain'd.
How many a spirit, born to bless,
  Hath sunk beneath that withering name,
Whom but a day's, an hour's success,
  Had wafted to eternal fame.
The Fire-Worshippers.

It rarely happens that historians agree in their views of the same subject, when attempting to point out the causes which have contributed to bring about any remarkable event recorded in their pages. If they collect their materials from cotemporary sources of information, they will inevitably be confused and misled by the partial and contradictory assertions of rival partizans ; while, on the other hand, if they resolve to suspend their judgment, until the fervor of party spirit has been cooled by time, they must, in many instances, be guided by conjecture, in filling the indistinct outline vaguely traced by tradition.

It has thus been the fate of the Spanish colonies in South America, that the motives, by which they were influenced to commence the late revolution, have been, for the most part, as imperfectly appreciated by the advocates of that startling measure, as they have been misrepresented by its declared enemies. Among the former, the Northern inhabitants of the same great continent bestow unqualified praise, very naturally, on the act of separation from the mother-country ; and applaud the abolition of regal dominion, without any reference to the circumstances, which effected this change in the opinions of their Southern brethren. Many ultra-royalists, meanwhile, whether of Spain or elsewhere, do not hesitate to reprobate in the strongest terms so violent a wrench from the bonds, (no matter whether of fraternity or slavery,) which had so long connected the Trans-Atlantic states with Europe. At the same time, neither the injudicious partizans, nor the prejudiced adversaries of *America Libre,* appear to be sufficiently aware that, instead of " seeking the day of this dislike," in reality

> " Rebellion lay in her way, and she found it."

Few European nations in any age, and certainly none in modern times, afford such striking instances of exalted fidelity to their sovereigns, as the neglected and calumniated Criollos of South America had shewed for centuries to the haughty race of Bourbon;—monarchs who never bestowed a thought on their vast colonies, but as connected with the supply of those enormous revenues, the failure of which has at length, by an admirable and not unusual retribution, entailed debility and ruin on the land so long accustomed to look indolently to them, as its only means of support. Bitter as was the cup of tyranny, which the viceroys compelled their *vazallos Indios* to drain,—glaring as was the corruption, and flagrant the consequent injustice, exercised on the devoted creoles by the *Oïdóres* sent over from Spain to decide all colonial causes,—and painfully mortifying as was the contempt with which their petitions were thrown aside, and their memorials neglected, in the bureaux at Madrid,—still the very name of "El Rey" [1] was held sacred by them. They blindly persisted in attributing their wrongs to any hand, but that of their adored sovereign; and clung fondly, through evil and good report, to the delusive idea, that he needed only to be made acquainted with their injuries to redress them.

While the youthful monarch, whom they all but idolised, was a prisoner at a foreign court, and deprived for a season of his throne, neither the machinations of the usurper's emissaries, nor the contradictory and oppressive edicts of the rival Juntas of Asturias and Sevilla, had power to shake the fidelity of the South Americans. At the very time when Venezuela was branded with the name of an insurgent province, and declared in a state of blockade, by the impotent malice of the Regencia at Cadiz, all classes and parties in that country were uniting to contribute largely, in proportion to their means, and in addition to the weight of taxes and imposts under which they groaned, for the service of that very despot, who made the first use of his freedom to convince the world, that nothing was farther from his thoughts than to afford his colonies the protection they implored.

The first blows struck by the unpractised warriors of Venezuela, who learned the lessons of conquest in the school of defeat, were actually aimed in defence of absolute monarchy. They unanimously and strenuously opposed Monteverde, Morillo, and other champions of the Spanish constitution; resenting it, in common with the ultra-royalists of the peninsula, as a degrading concession, wrung from their adored sovereign by the untoward circumstances of the times. They fought their first battles under the fullest persuasion that they were thereby acting the part of loyal subjects, in resisting all attempts at shackling by restrictions that despotism, which was hallowed by long prescription, and associated in their earliest recollections with their ideas of regal pomp and splendour. The proclamation of the Regencia, however, so ill-timed under the existing circumstances of Spain, aroused them from their day-dreams of loyalty, to the conviction that they had been shedding their blood in a thankless cause; for the sole purpose of rivetting still closer those chains, which they had, for the first time, a favorable opportunity of bursting. They resolved, in the excitement of the moment, and with arms in their hands, on a step which had not been previously contemplated in any part of the colonies;—that of separating themselves at once and for ever from Spain, and renouncing their allegiance to a king, who was confessedly as unwilling, as he was unable, to redress the wrongs under which they laboured, or to protect them against future aggression.

A year had nearly elapsed, since the citizens of Caraccas, in conjunction with the deputies from those districts of Venezuela, which were comprehended in the confederation of 1811, had solemnly sworn at the high altar of their principal church, to observe the newly promulgated constitution, and to maintain inviolate, at the expence of their lives and fortunes, the independence of their native land. A few days only remained until the solemn festival of Jueves Santo; and magnificent preparations had been made, in public and private, to celebrate that day in the manner it deserved, both as one of the principal *fiestas* of the Roman Catholic church, and as the anniversary of signing the first declaration of independence. A spacious platform, decorated with olive wreaths and myrtle garlands, was erected in front of the *altár mayor* of the cathedral, on which the civil magistrates, and principal military officers of the infant republic, were to renew their oaths of fidelity and devotion. That the ceremony of high mass, to be performed on the occasion at the convent chapels, might be more impressive, those novices, who were to exchange the white for the black veil, had selected this day of universal rejoicing, at their own desire, (or, as was more frequently the case, compelled by the authority of their parents and guardians,) to ratify the vows of poverty and seclusion, which were to separate them for ever from their homes and from the world.

It has been invariably the policy of the Romish church to adorn these victims for the sacrifice, and to stifle in their bosoms the voice of nature, by an appeal to their personal vanity. The solemn act of renouncing the pomps of the world is rendered little less than theatrical, by the profusion of wealth and splendour in which the novice appears decorated for the last time. Then, when unrobing to receive the coarse dark vestments of the cloister, she throws each jewel aside with an air of disdain, perhaps unaffected, until she is shorn by the hands of the Madre Abadeza of those brightest ornaments, the flowing ringlets of hair, in which she must no longer take an innocent pride. In most parts of South America, the parents of each novice, who is on the point of professing, are enjoined to exhibit to her the world, from which she is soon to be divorced, in its gayest and most enchanting points of view. The last month of her sojourn with them is dedicated to a round of entertainments, such as she had probably never before witnessed, or even anticipated; and her relations and friends vie with each other in heightening the effect of this ordeal of balls, *tertúlias*, and plays, through which, as through a necessary probation, every nun must pass.

The bigotted partizans of monastic seclusion refer triumphantly to this regulation, as a convincing proof that the minds of the novices are left perfectly free; and boast that the *professadas* have had sufficient experience of the pleasures they renounce, and that they despise them on a full and mature conviction of their worthlessness. Let them rather candidly confess, that the inexperienced girls are intoxicated with the novelty of their situation, in which they find themselves for the first time the "admired of all admirers;" and that they are supported in their resolution to endure what is, in the majority of cases, unavoidable, by the air of heroism they assume, and by the fond belief that they shall be remembered with regret and emulation by their former associates, long after they have been immured in the cells of a convent.

Besides this powerful motive, it must be remembered, that the odious and unjust system of *mayorazgo*, which existed in its fullest and most arbitrary form in the colonies, previously to the revolution, entailed the bulk of every family property, almost exclusively, on the eldest son. His younger brothers were thereby reduced to the level of dependents, as no learned or otherwise genteel profession was open to creoles; and his sisters were consigned, either to an ill-assorted marriage, as that must generally be where wealth or rank is exclusively on one side, or to the cloister. As the latter fate was usually contemplated as inevitable, and in conformity with the usual course of events, novices in general were in a great measure reconciled to it. From the resignation of despair, therefore, arose the calmness of their manner, too frequently but ill according with the quivering lip and tearful eye, at the celebration of the last ceremony.

Among the number of these fair devotees, who appeared at this time in bridal apparel, and surrounded by admiring friends, on the promenade of the Alaméda, and in the *palcos* of the theatre, Maria del Rosario Peñuela was conspicuous for the apparent cheerfulness of her smile, and exuberance of her mirth, as she fluttered from one gay scene to another. Don Beltràn, her father, was a wealthy creole merchant, who had devoted his whole life to the acquisition of riches, with which it had been originally his intention to purchase a Spanish *patente de nobleza*;—a common object of ambition among the natives of the colonies. He had unluckily deferred from year to year, putting this his favorite scheme into execution, until the distracted state of affairs on the peninsula, speedily followed by the revolution in Venezuela, obliged him to postpone, at least for the present, all negotiation on the subject at the court of Madrid. He, therefore, determined to avail himself of the law of mayorazgo, for the purpose of enriching an only son; and scrupled not to condemn his daughter to the seclusion of a convent, without having made the slightest attempt to ascertain how far her feelings on the subject coincided with his own.

Joaquin Peñuela, the son for whom Don Beltràn anticipated those honours, which he saw no immediate prospect of being able to enjoy in his own person, had gone through the usual routine of education, prescribed by custom in the colonies. This was certainly by no means calculated to excite the envy, or arouse the jealousy, of the Spanish Hidalgos, among whom his father's ambition panted to enrol him. He had been duly instructed, by Don Beltràn's steward, in that unvarying hieroglyphic scrawl, dignified by the name of writing, which has been handed down by tradition from the first settlers of the country,—men whom we may easily suppose, from their warlike habits, to have formed their letters "like spear-heads, or sword-blades,"—and is still usually learned, as it were by rote, without the least reference to the alphabet of any known language, ancient or modern. He also learned to decipher printed characters, by a separate effort of memory; for it must be understood, that in many instances, at the time we speak of, the acquirement of writing did not necessarily pre-suppose a knowledge of reading. He was thus enabled in process of time, by dint of application, to read the lives of San Antonio de Padua, and San Francisco de Paula; as also a voluminous work, well known in the colonies, entitled "Hechos Celebres," in which those who have faith in modern miracles may be edified by sundry passages of monastic lore, rather inclining to the marvellous. Here, for example, he read, how the pretensions of the first and only South American female saint,—Santa Rosa de Lima,—to canonization, were stoutly denied by the Pope, who exclaimed—"*India, ý Santa! asi como llueven rosas!*"—"Indian, and saint! as much so, as that it rains roses!" and how, as the legend declares, "a miraculous shower of roses began instantly to fall in the Vatican, and ceased not, until the incredulous Pontiff retracted his slander." With these and similar works, permitted to be read in the country, the youth used to beguile the tedious hours of listless inactivity, to which he was doomed in his father's house, previously to its being determined, as has been already hinted, that he was to be a *Don*.

"Some are born great," quoth Malvolio, "and some have greatness thrust upon them." This last was precisely Joaquin's case; and, that he might be properly qualified for the distinguished part he was to be hereafter called on to play, Don Beltràn procured him a tutor, in the guise of a *Monigote* of San Franciso. Fray Diego was strongly recommended to his attention by the Prior of that monastery, on the score of his humility and temperance; both which virtues were of no small account in the opinion of his new patron, who was at once overbearing and avaricious. In them, to say the truth, the young friar had been tolerably well disciplined, during the time when, in the humble situation of lay-brother, he used to perform all the menial offices required by his superior, besides begging alms for his convent at his leisure hours; and he had, in requital, been taught a smattering of the humanities, and finally admitted to the tonsure.

Under such an instructor, it will readily be supposed, that the embryo Don made no very striking progress in the politer branches of literature. Nevertheless, as his father now considered it expedient to allow him a *mezáda* for his private expences, proportioned to his prospects in life, but far exceeding his most sanguine expectations, he soon formed acquaintances, who initiated him into the mysteries of the trueco table and the *cancha de gallos*,[3] while he acquired from the Monigote Diego a proficiency in the monastic games at cards, called *briscàn* and *tenderéte*.[†] His ignorance was accompanied and rendered more prominent, (as is not unfrequently the case,) by a proportionate share of self-conceit; and, to finish the picture, his selfishness was such, that he contemplated with indifference, or rather with secret complacency, the sacrifice which was about to be made of a sister's happiness to his aggrandizement.

CHAPTER II.

CHAPETONS.—A LOVER.

Claudio.—If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs; he brushes his hat o'mornings; what should that bode?

Pedro.—Indeed that tells a heavy tale for him. Conclude he is in love.

Claudio.—Nay, but I know who loves him.

Pedro.—That would I know too: I warrant, one that knows him not.

Much Ado About Nothing.

WHILE Maria del Rosario's nearest relatives were thus combined to immure her in the *oubliettes* of a convent, there was one, who suffered more severely at the prospect of her irremediable loss, than he dared to avow, even to himself. Carlos Sepúlveda's father was a native of San Ildefonzo, near Segovia, in Spain, and had emigrated to Caraccas, early in life, with no fortune, but a tolerable education and unwearied industry, and no other recommendation, besides an unblemished Castilian descent, and the honour of accounting himself "*tan Don como el Rey.*" He married a criolla, of the small village of Maracăy, with whom he received a portion, by no means considerable in amount, but sufficient as a foundation, on which the skilful and persevering Spaniard built an ample fortune.

The success of the Chapetòns,—as all European settlers were formerly styled,—is indeed proverbial in South America, where the light-hearted and improvident natives used formerly to be astonished at the rapidity with which a mere *merca-chifle*, or pedlar, would amass such sums as were dazzling, even in this land of precious metals. The "Græculus esuriens" of former days, and his modern resemblance, so accurately pourtrayed by our English Juvenal, are neither of them worthy to be compared with the Chapetòn, in the science of money-making. Although the influx of needy Spaniards has been somewhat diverted from its usual channel by the revolution, still the prisoners of war, who were permitted towards the close of the contest to survive the "guerra á la muerte," are invariably to be found established as shopkeepers, *pulpéros*, and *bodegonéros*.[5] This is more particularly the case in the sea-ports on the coast of the Pacific, where they, in a great measure, monopolize those professions; and in the large towns of the interior, as Bogotà, Popayan, and Santiago, where they swarm almost to the exclusion of the native tradesmen.

Don Ramòn Sepúlveda, who lived in the comparatively tranquil times of Venezuela, towards the latter end of the last century, found much less difficulty in enriching himself, than would be experienced at the present day, by any one who might feel inclined to try the experiment. A Spaniard, meanwhile, never forgets his native land, under any circumstances. Don Ramòn, having converted all his disposable property, except a small plantation at Maracăy, into hard dollars, embarked for Cadiz, in the year 1800, with his wife, Doña Gertrùdes, and his only son Carlos, then a boy about ten years of age, the care of whose education was one of his father's chief inducements to undertake the voyage. He arrived with them in safety at San Ildefonzo, where he was fortunate enough to meet with an opportunity of purchasing an estate, which had formerly belonged to his ancestors. The measure of his happiness now appeared full; especially as young Carlos, for whom he had taken care to provide the best instructors in every polite accomplishment, as well as in most branches of liberal education, was all that the fondest parent could desire.

A melancholy reverse of fortune took place, which blighted all these fair prospects. On the invasion of Spain by the armies of Napoleon, in 1808, Don Ramòn, with all the enthusiasm of a *parvenu* who is eager to distinguish himself in the country, armed and disciplined a body composed of his tenants and peons, at the head of whom he joined the guerilla, commanded by the celebrated partizan, Pablo Morillo. But being unfortunately wounded and made prisoner, near Palencia, in a rencontre with a skirmishing party of Marmont's cavalry, he was tried by a French military commission, and shot as a traitor to his new sovereign, Joseph Buonaparte. His estate was, of course, confiscated to "*el tio Pépe,*" as customary in similar cases. His widow, almost heart-broken at his loss, was enabled by the fidelity of the peasants to make her escape to Cadiz with her son Carlos; having saved, from the wreck of her husband's property, barely a sufficiency to obtain a passage to Caraccas. Thither she determined to return, and cherish the remembrance of her misfortunes, in the solitude of her plantation at Maracāy.

Don Gabriàno, her brother, who was the Señor Cura of the village, a man of superior talent and information, found in his young nephew a pleasing companion, as well as an intelligent pupil; and, in the few years that elapsed, immediately before the revolution, employed himself, most agreeably and successfully, in perfecting his education as far as was in his power. At the time of the declaration of independence, a period in which talent of every description was called into action, and met with flattering and effectual encouragement from the new government, the Cura of Maracāy, whose sentiments as a patriot, and eminent abilities as an orator, were well known, was invited to the capital on the recommendation of General Miranda, with whom he had been formerly on intimate terms. Through his interest, Don Gabriàno was appointed to fill a vacant stall in the cathedral, as *canónigo*, and was named chaplain to the Junta Suprema of Caraccas. At his earnest request, but more particularly with a view to her son's advantage, Doña Gertrudes accompanied her brother to the city; and, shortly after, Carlos Sepúlveda entered the regiment of Cazadores de Aragoa, with the rank of Alférez. Having distinguished himself in several engagements with the royalist forces, on the frontiers of Coro, he was promoted, according to the rapid *ascenso* of the time, through the intermediate steps, to the command of a troop in the Húzares de Caraccas, and was selected by Miranda to fill a vacancy in his staff, as aide-de-camp.

In the latter capacity, he necessarily passed the greater part of his time at head-quarters, in the capital, where he became acquainted with Señor de Peñuela, who was distantly related to his mother. Don Beltràn was well known to be a bitter opponent of his country's independence, and the more inveterately so, as it was effected by means of a revolution, which had blasted his long-cherished hopes of ennobling himself. He was, at the same time, exceedingly anxious to be on good terms with the existing government, hoping by that means to escape the suspicion under which he laboured, (not unconscious that he deserved it), of furnishing secret intelligence to the royalist General Monteverde, at Cartagéna. He therefore eagerly courted the friendship of a chaplain of the Junta, although he had looked down with disdain on the humble and unimportant Cura of Maracáy; taking especial pains to conciliate the good opinion of Doña Gertrudes and her son, as he was well aware, that he should, through them, pay most effectual court to the canónigo. Doña Gertrùdes, far from suspecting him of any ulterior views in the flattering advances he made, felt pleased by his attention to Carlos; and, on that account, readily admitted the apologies and excuses he had invented for not having earlier acknowledged the relationship. Her son, too, although by no means captivated by his manners, which were anything but prepossessing, could not help being grateful, for the lively interest he appeared to take in the welfare of his family.

Maria del Rosario Peñuela was, at this period, a boarder at the convent of Santa Clara, where Doña Gertrùdes became a constant visitor, taking a maternal interest in the lovely affectionate girl, who had lost her mother at a very early age, and who had evidently never known a father's tenderness. Don Beltràn, indeed, seldom if ever visited her; having committed her entirely to the care of the Madre Abadéza, who was as indulgent towards her as could be expected from one of an order of devotees, by whom all natural affection is considered a crime. As for her brother Joaquin, she scarcely knew him, nor had she even seen him since they were both children. Carlos accompanied his mother in her daily visits to the convent; at first, from a natural feeling of curiosity, to ascertain what she could possibly find to interest her so warmly in the sister of so repulsive a being, as he could not but consider Joaquin to be. He was charmed by her unadorned youthful beauty; and his admiration of her unaffected loveliness ripened at each succeeding interview, into the purest and most ardent love.

Maria del Rosario also loved him, she believed, as a brother. When summoned by the *Hermana Escucha*[6] of the week to the grated window of the parlour, she hurried, with greater eagerness than usual, on the days she expected to see him. If he chanced not to accompany his mother, which was but seldom the case, and then only when the unavoidable duties of his profession detained him, she would inquire for him with such undissembled earnestness, that Doña Gertrùdes, although far from being particularly clear-sighted or suspicious, could not avoid observing that the young novice felt such an interest in Carlos, as might one day prove fatal to her peace of mind. To warn her on the subject appeared impossible; for Doña Gertrùdes well knew and respected the delicacy of her feelings, and dreaded to inflict on them an undeserved and needless wound. It was, at the same time, sufficiently obvious, that it had become indispensably necessary to attempt, by the temporary removal of the beloved object, to erase the impression he had unfortunately made: for she was too well aware of Don Beltràn's intentions with respect to the aggrandisement of his son, to hope that he could be prevailed on to forego them in favour of a youth, whose paternal estate was so small, that he might almost be said to depend on his sword alone for his future fortunes. The very circumstance of his having accepted a commission in the service of La Patria, was also decidedly against his pretensions: for, although Don Beltràn took especial care to disguise his principles, he was notoriously addicted to the *Godo*[*] cause, as could not but be surmised, from his constant and familiar intercourse with the avowed as well as secret emissaries of Joseph Buonaparte, of whom there were many at the time in Caraccas. Besides, he and his son had invariably evaded, under different frivolous pretences, being enrolled in the Guardia Cívica, or any other of the numerous provincial corps, which had been raised from time to time in support of the independence of Venezuela; although to be a member of them was then considered, in some measure, a test of patriotism.

Don Carlos did not fail soon to perceive, that his mother no longer invited him to accompany her in her visits to the novice of Santa Clara; and that she evidently took pains to evade his proposals of calling at the convent. Doña Gertrùdes was at length obliged partly to explain her motives; and flattered herself at the moment, from his silence and apparent acquiescence, which were in reality effects of his surprise and astonishment, that he would find no difficulty in suppressing, and by degrees totally overcoming, his growing attachment. She even began to doubt, from the calmness with which he heard her, whether, in reality, it ever existed. Her son, indeed, resolved to be guided by her advice; and determined on making an effort to forget, in the duties and animating exercise of his profession, that he had ever seen Maria del Rosario;—

"But he who stems a stream with sand,
"And fetters flame with flaxen band,
"Has yet a harder task to prove,—
"By firm resolve to conquer love!"

Let those who have studied to forget any object, —be it what it may,—of love, ambition, hope, fear, or the meaner pursuits of this "working-day world," —let them say, how the very endeavour serves but to imprint it yet more forcibly on the memory; and how the resolution, to think no more of it, recalls it more vividly and incessantly to the recollection.

In his mother's earnestness, while she attempted to impress on him the necessity of his forbearing to visit the convent, she had unadvisedly, and almost without being aware of what she said, hinted at the too probable effect of his frequent attentions to her young friend. Carlos, in his subsequent reflections on this communication, felt the full import of her words, and dwelt on them with fond and secret exultation. He had no suspicion that the noviciate was to end in the cloister; and flattered himself that nothing but his want of fortune (which ever appears to a youthful lover an inconsiderable impediment), could prevent the eventual accomplishment of the wishes he permitted himself to form. He therefore indulged, without scruple, in seductive day-dreams, which enchanted his imagination with honours to be won in the field, and the prospect of elevating himself, by the help of his sword and lance, to a pinnacle of martial glory, from whence he might venture, without fear of refusal, to offer his hand where he felt his heart to be irrevocably devoted. Animated by these delusive hopes, he engaged with renewed ardour in the career of fame; and, in the few short visits which he paid at the convent, on his return from the succeeding campaigns, he commanded himself so far, as to obtain the warmest praise from his mother for his self-denial, and even to deceive Maria del Rosario into a belief, that he regarded her with indifference or aversion.

At length, on his return from an expedition in which he had accompanied Miranda, he unexpectedly heard that she was to take the veil on the festival of Jueves Santo following; and the truth flashed on him at once, in all its melancholy certainty. With a sudden resolution, inspired by despair, he sought out Don Beltràn, and disclosed to him his long cherished hopes; imploring him to pause, were it but for another year, before he crushed them for ever. Don Beltràn listened to him with composure, but, as Carlos fancied, with a smile of fiendish exultation. He coolly answered, that nothing would have given him greater pleasure than the alliance of a family, which he had every reason to respect; but that circumstances, which could not be controlled or altered, imperiously demanded the seclusion of his daughter. He farther observed, that as the parties could not, in all probability, have seen much of each other, he had no doubt but that the momentary disappointment would leave no lasting trace, when once her monastic vow had rendered all regret unavailing. He concluded, by demanding of Don Carlos, as a man of honour, that he would abstain, if possible, from seeing his daughter; and that, at all events, he would pledge his word not to make the least attempt at influencing her determination, which he declared to be decidedly in favour of the cloister.

Sepúlveda, irritated beyond the bounds of forbearance, by the calm contemptuous tone in which his proposal was rejected, renewed his expostulations, with a heat that gave Don Beltràn all the advantage over him he could desire. In fact, Peñuela was so conscious of the unnatural and arbitrary nature of the measure he had resolved on, that he was glad of a pretence for quarrelling with any one who ventured to oppose it.

The conference having ended in a most unsatisfactory manner for Sepulveda, he hurried to the society of his brother officers, with the intention of shaking off, in their agreeable company, if possible, the sense of degradation he could not help feeling, when he reflected on his having stooped to solicit the alliance of one, whom he had now every reason to dislike. Not even to his mother did he relate the mortifying occurrence; for he was well aware that the disappointment of his hopes could not fail to affect her deeply. His honourable feelings still more forcibly forbade him to reveal his hopeless love to its unconscious object; and he firmly resolved to carry the secret with him to his grave, rather than embitter her existence in the seclusion to which she was doomed, by an unnecessary disclosure.

Don Beltran, on his side, felt himself equally interested, although from very different motives, in concealing all that had taken place at their interview; so that Doña Gertrudes still continued her visits at his house, and with greater frequency during the month of temporary freedom his daughter enjoyed, between the expiration of her novitiate, and the day of her taking the veil. She also so far conquered her habitual reluctance to mixing in society,—for Maria del Rosario's sake, and at her earnest request,—that she accompanied her young friend to all the public places, as well as private entertainments, at which it was usual to appear while treading the round of gaiety prescribed by custom to those in her situation.

Doña Gertrudes could not help observing, that her son studiously avoided attending her on these parties of pleasure; and that, when they happened accidently to meet in company, his manner was more constrained than was natural to him, and he invariably found some excuse for retiring. Her young protegée also saw it, and was sensibly grieved at a conduct she could not but consider unkind. Far from suspecting his secret motive, she attributed his evident unwillingness to join any society, of which she formed a part, to a coldness of which he could by no means be justly accused; and piqued by his apparent indifference, she affected a gaiety which deceived every one but herself.

CHAPTER III.

THE ALAMEDA.—THE CAZIQUE.—THE CHINGANERA.

"From ev'ry place condemn'd to roam, in ev'ry place we
seek a home;
"In shelt'ring nooks, and hollow ways, we cheerly pass
our winter days.
"Come circle round the Gypsies' fire; our songs our
stories never tire.
"Come stain your cheek with nut or berry; you'll find
the Gypsies' life is merry."

Gypsies' Glee.

The vigil of Jueves Santo, at Caraccas, was one of those enchanting evenings, peculiar to tropical climates, in which the hour of sunset is hailed with delight by all classes of animated beings, as a refreshing and invigorating relief from the scorching heat felt during the day. Although the twilight was so short as to be almost imperceptible, the peculiar lustre of the moon, and brilliancy of the stars, amply supplied the sun's place, on his sinking out of sight behind the mountains of Maracäy, with that mild placid light which cannot weary.

The whole population of Caraccas began to pour out of the crowded city, through the different avenues leading to the open country; and the public walks were rapidly filled with groups of laughing creoles, who appeared to have reserved their gaiety until this hour. The day had been unusually and oppressively sultry; and, as the numerous parties of friends and acquaintance passed each other, they paused to remark, that the cool mountain breeze had never wafted such perfume from the neighbouring plantations. The tops of the stately alamos[8] planted along the suburbs, sparkled with innumerable fire-flies, which, as they flitted from tree to tree, might almost have been mistaken for the scarce less brilliant meteors, that appear to fall from every quarter of the heavens, during the still nights preceding and following the hot days of summer near the Line. The shrill notes of the mocking-bird, and the Virginian nightingale, were clearly distinguished above the busy hum of the multitude; while, at intervals, the tinkling of a mule's bell was heard, as the leading *machos* of a large drove passed drowsily by, on their way to the savanna, followed by the muleteers, either chaunting their Llanéro songs in the monotonous recitative of the low country, or carelessly touching the strings of their *vihuélas*, [9] as they rode slowly past.

At the lower end of the principal promenade. called, from the superior size and beauty of the poplars by which it was bordered, La Alaméda, a large semicircular spot of ground was railed off, and surrounded with marble seats, carved to resemble sofas and ottomans. Here two military bands were stationed, as usual in summer evenings, occasionally relieving each other in performing such national and patriotic airs, as had already been composed in Venezuela, or adopted from the music of other countries. The concourse attracted by the musicians was, of course, greater here than in any other part of the Alameda; and, as the seats were exclusively occupied by the mothers and daughters of the principal families, few of the parties, which preferred pacing the broad centre walk to listening to the music, approached this spot without pausing for a few moments, to look with interest and admiration on the fair Caracqueñas.

The *saya* and *basquina*, in which the Criollas invariably appear when abroad, form a dress peculiarly well adapted to display to the best advantage the faultless symmetry of their fine forms; and they are not unconscious how well the dark colour, in which they delight to clothe themselves, is suited to their lovely brunette complexions. The South American females live in so mild a climate, that they find it unnecessary to cover their heads, when taking the air. They are consequently remarkable for the neatness and simplicity with which their glossy black hair is at all times braided; its sole ornament being usually a carnation, or a single rose-bud.

The *ciudadános*, who strolled along beneath the poplar trees, were far more various, and even showy in their dress. A middling class in society was then almost unknown. It did not begin to assume any degree of consequence, until several years of independence had permitted a country, which had hitherto known no intermediate degrees between masters and slaves, to resolve itself into a more liberal arrangement of its inhabitants. The *pueblo*, in which were comprehended, at the time we speak of, all those who were not entitled by birth, station, or wealth, to be considered as *cavallĕros*, did not intrude on this promenade. They were, however, to the full as happy, if not more so, on the Arrayàn, or in the different boulevards of the suburbs, where the crowded fandangos, and extensive open sheds appropriated to the music and dancing of the Chinganéras, re-echoed with the sound of guitars, and vihuélas. But along the Alaméda were to be seen the sleek and portly dignitaries of the church, in their peculiar and striking costume, loudly and earnestly discussing disputed topics in the politics of the day. With these were mingled officers of all ranks, belonging to the different patriot corps stationed at head-quarters, or to the staff; glittering in every possible variety of splendid and theatrical dress,—for it could not in strictness be called uniform,—that their fancy inclined them to adopt, before years of repeated and destructive reverses had sobered the judgment of the republican soldiers, and reduced to distress and penury the wealthiest of the land.

These, with a few civilians of distinction, who either held, or aspired to, the highest places in the newly established government, were almost the only occupiers of the principal promenade; while the side walks were slowly paced by friars from different monasteries, either in the white and gray habits of the Dominican and Franciscan orders, or in the dark cowl and broad black belt, worn by the brotherhoods of San Augustin or San

Juan de Dios. These cenobites scorned with true monastic pride, to associate with the pueblo, and were withheld by the spirit of party, (being all violent Godos), as well as unfitted by the *gaucherie* and moroseness acquired in the cloister, for joining the society of the more liberal, as well as better educated secular clergy, or of the military. They therefore wandered about with a discontented and suspicious air, anxiously endeavouring, as they glided unnoticed behind the poplars, to catch the import of the enthusiastic harangues, with which the unpractised but zealous advocates of independence were, by turns, entertaining their hearers. These monigótes were of the royalist party, with scarcely an exception; and, as many of them as the Spanish general Monteverde, thought it worth his while to bribe, were indefatigable spies, employing themselves without intermission, in procuring and transmitting him information.

Among the numerous young officers, who amused themselves on the Alaméda, one while by listening to and commenting on the sage remarks of their seniors, and the next by criticising the style of beauty and dress of their lovely countrywomen, was Carlos Sepúlveda. His numerous acquaintance had in vain endeavoured to engage him in his usual lively strain of conversation, and had at last abandoned him to his melancholy reflections; each accusing him of ill-humour, and repeating the same exclamation of "*Que demonios tiene nuestro Carlítos!*"

He had seen Doña Gertrùdes pass by, with her protegée, to the seats at the end of the walk; and as he well knew that this was the last night he should see Maria del Rosario on the Alaméda, he had resolved to approach her, and at least bid her farewell, if he could, with composure. He had repeatedly advanced with this determination, but had as often drawn back irresolute; and was leaning against one of the álamos at a short distance from the music, unconsciously gazing on the crowd before him, when his reverie was suddenly interrupted by a friendly voice, the tones of which were familar to his ear,—"*Enhorabuena, amigo Carlos!* you appear to have turned musical amateur to-night."

Sepúlveda hastily turned, and recognized his old comrade Lorenzo Tovàr, a Lieutenant in the Cazadores de Aragoa, who had that moment arrived from La Guayra, where his regiment was doing duty;—as might be known by his high boots and spurs, broad palm-leaf sombréro, and military capote, covered with the dust of the road.

"The very friend I could have most wished to see!" exclaimed Don Carlos; "I am truly rejoiced at your arrival camarada Tovàr! but how have you contrived to obtain permission to visit the capital during the festival of our anniversary? I know Miranda's instructions to the colonels of regiments have been such, as most strictly forbid any leave of absence being granted before next week; for the Junta Gobernatíva is apprehensive of too great a concourse collecting here, to witness the ceremonies of renewing the oath."

"True, Carlos; and although I made all the interest possible with *el Tio Comandante* for leave to come up and see you, he was inexorable. However, the governor of the port fortunately had important dispatches to send, as well as verbal communications to make, to the Excelentisima Junta; and, as I was in some measure the occasion of a discovery being made, to which they refer, I was selected as the messenger. But, *vamos amigo!* you seem to forget that I am almost a stranger in Caraccas. You must be my guide as well as host; and, in the first place, I must send my Indian friend here to your quarters."

"By all means. Let him enquire at our barrack gate for my ordenanza, who will take every care of him for the credit of the corps."

As he spoke, he turned round to look for the Indian whom his friend had mentioned, and saw the tall spare form of a Cachiri, [10] who had retired a few paces from where the young men stood, to avoid listening to them; private conversation being usually held sacred by the untaught honour of the native tribes, and more especially by those which are commonly reputed least civilised. He was a man far advanced in years, as was evident, rather from the wrinkles in his dark red brow, and the few grey hairs that might be seen in his long and loose, but neatly combed, black hair, than from any stoop in his gait, or emaciation in his limbs; the firmness and well rounded contour of which, evidently belonged to a hunter rather than a labourer. His only clothing,—and that he had adjusted on entering the city,—was the dark brown woollen *ruána*, [11] which served him, alternately, as a horse-cloth by day, and a blanket by night, wrapped loosely round his waist, and barely reaching below his knees, leaving his broad chest, seamed with numerous scars, fully exposed to view. His thick straight hair hung down, over his muscular shoulders, without the least appearance of a curl; being parted in the front, and confined backwards by a narrow red fillet, so as to shew his high forehead, and small ears, in which he wore silver ear-rings in the shape of a crescent. These were his only ornament, excepting a rosary of black shining berries, with padre-nuestros and a cross of gold. He also wore a double scapulary of Nra Señora del Carmen, to the string of which were suspended two or three small bags containing Indian charms, and the indispensable utensil among South Americans, a tooth-pick made of a condòr's quill. He had no weapon but the usual *cuchillo cachiblanco*, a long double-edged knife, with a white carved handle made of alligator's bone. His knees, legs, and small finely turned feet, (a distinguishing mark of his race,) on which he wore light *alpargates*, or sandals, plaited from the white fibres of the aloe, would have been valuable models for a sculptor. His arms were stained with the deep blue dye of indigo, in a neat waving pattern extending as far as the wrists, where broad stripes, in close imitation of net-work bracelets, were painted of the same colour.

His head was thrown back with rather a haughty air of assumption; and a thoughful frown, evidently proceeding from the habitual melancholy of his race, rather than from sullenness or ill-humour, gave that intelligent expression to his handsome, though strongly marked, Indian features, which such are eminently capable of assuming. Don Lorenzo addressed him twice before he heard; so earnest was his gaze on the circle of Caracqueñas surrounding the music.

"*Oyga!* compadre Pichiloncöy! take our horses to the barracks of the Húzares, behind the palace, and enquire for Capitan Sepúlveda's servant. He will shew thee where to tie them up, and find thee a bed, and probably something better to eat than that *coca*, [12] which thou art eternally chewing."

The Indian glanced his eagle eye on the officer; and said, as he drew the horses towards him and prepared to mount, "No barrack for me to night, compadre Tovàr. I shall take the horses out to the savanna, and sleep there myself."

"*Gua!* man,—they will be far better off in the cavalry barracks, with plenty of maiz and cane-tops for forage, than with the coarse alfalfa of the plantations, and mosquitos innumerable tormenting them all night."

"No matter, compadre! The last time I suffered my horse to be tied under a shed in one of your barracks, he lost more blood by the *morciagalos*, [13] in one night, than three months savanna feeding could replace. Besides, there was no sea-breeze all this day; and the wells on the road are dry. We shall have an earthquake to-night or to-morrow morning at farthest, compadre! and better the light leaves of the forest, than the rough tiles of the town overhead, when the spirit of the Andes starts in anger from his slumbers."

Having thus said, he sprung, with scarcely the appearance of an effort, on his shaggy wild-looking *mocho*; and disappeared in an instant, leading with him Tovàr's horse.

"Where did you pick up your new attendant?" enquired Sepúlveda; "One would be tempted to observe, that you might clothe him a little better, amigo Lorenzo! now that you have brought him from his native wilds; especially when paying a visit at head-quarters."

"You do me far too much honour, camarada, to suppose him an attendant of mine. *Cuerpo de tal!* the Cazíque Pichiloncôy would scorn to attend even on his very catholic majesty Don Fernando, unless indeed on terms of equality. Be it known to you that, if he favours me so far as to look after my horse, or even to cook occasionally for us both, when on a journey, it is merely as a *compadre*, and under the fullest conviction, that I would do the same for him, were he to require it. Clothe him, saidst thou? truly I wasted more arguments and rhetoric on him this afternoon, before I could persuade him even to wrap his ruána decently round him, that he might be in some sort fit to appear in the streets of a city, than would have set me up as an *avogádo*. You have seen him here,—in a place to which he has a mortal dislike, as indeed he has to all towns and even villages,—simply because he is a most devoted friend and ally of mine, and has taken a fancy to do me every good turn in his power."

"Allow me, Señor de Tovàr, to congratulate you on so important an acquisition. Pray how has *su merced* contrived, with all your wildness, to get into the good graces of so serious a being as an Indian? and, above all, a Cachirl?"

"Faith! for no other reason, that I could discover, than that he saved my life at the lagoon of Maracäy, in my childhood, when my canoe upset as I was fishing. Last year, too, at Puerto Cavallo, when the barber-surgeon of our regiment gave me over in the calentúra, my compadre heard of it, and came to my assistance with his deer-skin wallet full of herbs and barks, with which he soon set me on my legs. But he is now the principal cause of my being detached to the city. The whole tribe of Cachirls, you well know, are staunch patriots, and of course at war with the Guagívis, who are leagued with the Godos. It appears that one of these last, who was entrusted with private intelligence for Monteverde from his spies in Caraccas, fell into an ambush of the Cachirls. Pichiloncōy, having obtained possession of the despatches, which he rightly conjectured to be of importance, brought them to me, that I might get whatever credit was to be obtained from the Junta by the discovery. But my compadre took care, according to the laudable custom of his nation, to make his prisoner confess, (by no gentle means you may suppose,) everything he knew relative to his employers. The Governor of La Guayra, therefore, sent him with me here; he has been already examined before the Junta; and I left that sage body, just now, in close deliberation on his intelligence, and on the contents of the intercepted correspondence. And now that I have answered all your questions, tell me, Carlos, will you be my *vaqueáno?* Will you take me to see Doña Gertrudes? and introduce me to all the fair Caracqueñas of your acquaintance? It is, I doubt not, very extensive; for you Señores of the staff have great advantages over your comrades of the line, in that instance."

"Willingly, camaráda; I believe my mother is at this moment seated near the music. But, as for any farther introductions, you must be greatly altered indeed from the *tunante* I remember you, if you cannot dispense with that ceremony."

The two friends encountered some difficulty in making their way through the press; for a wandering Chinganéra [14] had just commenced a wild tonadilla of the hill country, which had attracted the attention of all within hearing. She accompanied her song, which was the old plaintive air of "La Montonéra," on a small vihuela formed of a hollow gourd; and the young men, having paused to listen, caught the following words:

[15] "Montonéra soy, Senoras!
"Yo no niego mi nacion,—
"Mas vale ser Montonéra
"Que no Porteno pintor:
"Montonéra en Buenos Ayres
"Por las Pampas he pasádo;
"Montonéra por las nieves
"De las Andes he baxádo.

"En su curso por el cielo
"Quien atajarà al Lucéro?
"Mas atreve quien pretiende
"Atajar al Montonéro.
"Libres vuelan los Condores
"Por la cana Cordilléra;
"Y no menos por los valles
"Libre va la Montonéra."

While the Chinganéra was singing these verses, another of her tribe, drest in the picturesque garb formerly worn by the aborigines of Coquibacóa, and crowned with the brilliant feathers of the loro and tucàn, had been collecting in a gaily stained calabash the contributions of the audience. On seeing Don Carlos and his friend muffled in their capotes, she addressed the "*Senores tapados*" with the usual mysterious speeches, which those of her profession so well know how to adapt to all possible circumstances, and which are purposely rendered so vague, that they seldom fail to "keep the word of promise to the ear." Her quick and practised eye caught the look of interest with which, in spite of himself, Sepúlveda heard her oracular hints; and from the amount of his contribution, which she could pretty accurately guess at as it fell into the calabash, she was prompted to address him immediately with a *dispedída*, such as used then to be sung at farewell serenades by despairing lovers.

[16] En el dispedirse del triste Ramon
De su bella Elísa, quien leal adorò,
En llanto anegada le dixo su amor,—
"No me olvides nunca! no me olvides, no!

"Si el amor no se paga sino con amor,
"Si jamas algúna como yo te amó,
"Y si eres sensíble a tanta pasion,—
"No me olvides nunca! no me olvides, no!"

Ramon luego luego su llanto enxugò,
Y al partir le dixò, "No me olvides, no!
"Olvide otra cosa, como no sea *yo*;—
"No me olvides nunca! no me olvides, no!"

The applause, which had greeted the first of these songs, was renewed on hearing the *dispedída*. It appeared so peculiarly adapted to Carlos Sepúlveda's actual situation and feelings, that he was almost induced to believe himself known and recognized by the Chinganéra; and he actually fancied, that she had, in some inconceivable manner, penetrated the secret of his hopeless passion. Under this impression, he took his friend Tovàr's arm, and attempted to lead him from the circle; but Don Lorenzo laughing declared, that he was determined to hear his fortune in his turn. Having accordingly dropped his offering into the calabash, the Indian minstrel, who had little difficulty in divining, from the cheerful tones of the light-hearted soldier, that

"From love's weak childish bow he lived unharmed,"

took the vihuela from her companion, and playing the lively air of "La Zambullidóra," sang the following verses;

[17] "Nino! tomad este anillo,
"Y llevadlo á la muralla,
"Y díle á la centinéla,—
"Este nino va de guardia.
"Vamo'nos, Chinas del alma!
"Vamo'nos á zambullir;
"El que zambulli se muere,—
"Yo tambien quiero morir!

"Huid la pompa del poblado,
"Nino huid á la savanna;
"Ali gozareis quieto,
"En salud, hasta manana.
"Vamo'nos, Chinas del alma!
"Vamo'nos á la caléta,
"Para ver los guacamallos
"Con fusil ý bayonéta.

"Piensan luego en dispertarse
"Los temblores ya dormídos;
"Volvad nino á la muralla,
"Salgad, ó serais perdído.
"Vamo'nos, Chinas del alma!
"Vamo'nos á la laguna,
"A ver si en la zambullída
"Encontremos una pluma,
"Con que escriba la chata mia
"Las cartas de Motenzuma."

"I believe the whole race of Indians has conspired to drive me from Caraccas," cried Tovàr, "before I have had time to see anything of the city. My compadre Pichiloncōy would fain have had me sleep in the savanna; and again, how confidently the Chinganéra has predicted an earthquake. It is fortunate for me that I am not superstitious. There is positively more witchcraft in the dark downcast eyes of that novice, whom thou hast been so earnestly gazing on, amigo Carlos, than in all the Indian wizards '*entre mar ý Cordilléra.*'[18] Who is she, pray? for I am convinced you are acquainted with her."

Sepúlveda started from a fairy dream of happiness, to which the *dispedída* had given rise. He muttered something, almost unintelligible, about a protegée of Doña Gertrudes, who was to take the veil the next day; and immediately led Tovàr to his mother, anxious to escape all further question on the subject. Don Lorenzo was a native of Maracaÿ, and consequently well known to Doña Gertrùdes, who expressed much pleasure at seeing him again after so long an absence. When she introduced him to Doña Maria, Carlos, who attenively watched his friend's looks, observed that he started on hearing the name of Peñuela, and that he appeared so much embarrassed, as scarcely to be capable of addressing her in his usual easy strain of compliment.

The hour having now arrived for the military bands to retire to their respective barracks, and there commence the *retréta*, the company began to disperse in different directions. As Doña Gertrùdes was about to leave the Alaméda, she remarked to Tovàr, that she considered herself fortunate in having secured two such excellent recruits, as himself and her son, for the ball that was to be given at Don Beltràn's house that night, at which she was to preside. Tovàr hastily replied, that they would both certainly have the honour of escorting her as far as the house; but that, for his part, the urgent business which had brought him to the capital, and would keep him employed the greater part of that night, must be his excuse for declining her invitation. Sepùlveda also, guessing, by the alteration in his friend's manner, that he was privy to some secret connected with the family of Peñuela, pleaded a particular engagement at General Miranda's house. Maria del Rosario heard his refusal with ill-concealed pain. "He loves me not,"—thought she,—"he flies to business, pleasure, anywhere to avoid meeting me, even this last night that I may be seen in the world. But why should I think of him more? to-night it is vain; to-morrow it will be sinful."

She then turned, with a sigh of regret, to the cheerful group which had assembled to conduct her home; and, leaning on Doña Gertrùdes, was soon enabled by the elastic spirits of youth to recover her composure. Sepùlveda, seeing the party sufficiently numerous to render his escort unnecessary, stood aside as they retired. When they had disappeared, his friend Tovàr took his arm in silence, and the young men walked a turn on the deserted Alaméda, without exchanging a word; the one evidently pondering on some unexpected and embarrassing discovery, and the other anticipating some interesting disclosure, on the subject that engrossed his mind. At length Don Lorenzo suddenly stopped, and, grasping his friend's hand, exclaimed, "It is in vain for you to dissemble, Carlos;—you are deeply interested for the Señorita Peñuela; perhaps you love her. I pity you from my soul, if it is really the case; and I am sincerely sorry for her."

"You alarm me, Lorenzo! her fate is indeed deeply to be lamented; but you speak far more seriously than is your usual manner. Surely there is nothing new, or extraordinary, in a novice taking the veil, even though it were against her will; and we are not so certain that such is her case."

"I heartily wish that were all, amigo," said Tovàr; "but you must know,—for I can safely trust you with the secret,—that her father, Don Beltràn Peñuela, is the very traitor to his country, whose secret correspondence with the enemy has been intercepted by Pichiloncōy. He will be seized to-night, by order of the Junta; and, unless something very extraordinary occurs to prevent it, he will suffer death as a spy. His property will be confiscated to the use of the State ; and his children will be reduced to beggary."

"Madre mia! can it be possible ? Tovàr, I must save the man for his daughter's sake. Another time you shall learn how ill he deserves it at my hands ; but, for his innocent daughter's sake, let me give him a hint of his danger."

"Not for the world, Sepùlveda! remember it was in strict confidence that I acquainted you with what I ought, perhaps, to have kept a profound secret. All you can possibly do for him, or rather for his daughter, will be to make use of your interest with Miranda, to get the sentence of death commuted into banishment for life from Venezuela. The traitor richly merits an exemplary punishment, and must not be permitted to escape. Meanwhile, let us hasten to the palace of the Junta, where we shall probably hear what has been determined."

CHAPTER IV.

THE BALL-ROOM.—THE ARREST.—THE COURT-MARTIAL.

Gratiano.—" Beg, that thou may'st have leave to hang thyself;
" And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
" Thou hast not left the value of a cord!
" Therefore thou must be hang'd at the state's charge."

Merchant of Venice.

THE magnificent residence of Don Beltràn Peñuela, in the Calle de los Capuchínos, was this night easily distinguishable from all others in that retired and quiet street, by the blaze of lights which shone through the viranda windows, and by the sound of musical instruments, as well under the fruit trees in the patio, as in the principal sala set apart for dancing. Variegated lamps were suspended in festoons from the pillars supporting the upper corridor, and from the orange and citron trees, under which throngs of *tapaditas*,—uninvited guests, who had come masked or otherwise disguised,—were trying the patience of their acquaintance by sportive raillery, and exercising their ingenuity in fruitless attempts to discover them.

The lower suite of apartments was occupied by card-players and politicians; and the rooms above stairs, all of which communicated with each other by large folding doors, were appropriated to dancing, music, and the tertúlia. The merry minstrelsy of harps and guitars, stationed under the awning of the viranda, animated the younger part of the guests to exert themselves in the contra-danza of Spain, and in the national dances known by the name of *el bambùco* and *la solita*; while, at intervals, the graceful valza, in which the South Americans excel, would detach several couple of dancers spinning in giddy circles through all the rooms, in which the elder and more sedate part of the company was engaged in conversation. Flowers of the brightest hues were scattered around; and china vases filled with a *mistura* composed of jasmin, orange, and citron flowers, mingled with fresh-gathered violets and rose-buds, and sprinkled with fragrant essences, were placed in every recess of the apartments.

Don Beltràn, unconscious of his detection and impending disgrace, appeared to think of nothing but promoting the mirth and festivity of his guests. He seemed to multiply himself, so incessantly did he bustle from room to room, in his eagerness to "win golden opinions" from the company he had assembled. During a pause in the dancing, while the attendants were offering the refreshments of ice and orcháta, a noise, as of a party of horse, was heard approaching along the unfrequented street; and some of the guests, who had been induced by curiosity to look out at the viranda, announced that a detachment of carbineers was drawn up in front of the house. Don Beltràn, turned pale as death, while he faltered his belief, that it could only be the night patrole, which had probably halted to listen to the music. A sudden silence ensued in the laughing circle ; and the eyes of all were turned anxiously on the doors opening into the corridor, in expectation of they knew not what dreadful occurrence.

The heavy measured tread of soldiers, and the sound of their sabres, was heard distinctly ascending the broad staircase. All drew back as the plumed and booted troops entered the saloon, and an officer, advancing at the head of a few files of dismounted dragoons, slightly saluted the company. He observed, that the nature of his duty called for no apology ; and demanded to see Don Beltràn Peñuela. The master of the house stepped forward, and the officer, briefly informing him that he was arrested by order of the Junta Suprema, on a charge of treason, ordered him to be taken into custody. At the ominous sound of *treason*, all the guests shrunk back from the prisoner, as if they apprehended contamination from his touch. His daughter alone sprang forward, and clung to him ; exclaiming, " he is my father ! nothing but death shall part us."

The officer respectfully but firmly acquainted her, that his orders were most strictly to forbid every person whatever to hold communication with the prisoner. He moreover requested the astonished company to retire forthwith, as the corregidòr was in waiting below with his alguazils, to make the customary search for papers, and to secure the doors with the government seal. Don Beltràn had been thunderstruck by the suddenness of the arrest; but now recovered sufficient composure to re-assure his daughter and his guests. He affected to treat the whole as a mistake, or as the consequence of some false information laid before the Junta by a secret enemy, whom, he said, he already guessed at, and would take care to expose. He exhorted Maria del Rosario to take courage, and gave her in charge to Doña Gertrùdes, whom he requested, if he should not be set at liberty in the morning, that she would deliver over her protegée to the Madre Abadéza of the Monjas Claras, before early mass; and that the ceremony of taking the veil might proceed exactly as if he were present. He then, having embraced his daughter, and taken leave of his guests, lamenting this unceremonious interruption of their amusement, declared his readines to accompany his guards. They surrounded and led him down stairs, where a horse was provided, on which he was conducted by the escort to the palace of the Junta Suprema.

A military tribunal had been previously assembled in the Sala de Justicia, in readiness for that summary mode of trial, and immediate sentence, so essentially necessary for the support of a newly established revolutionary Government. On arriving at the outer court of the palace, the prisoner was conducted, without a moment's delay, into a small but tolerably furnished apartment; which, having been used, during the time of the Spaniards, as a temporary place of confinement for the better sort of prisoners, still retained the massive gratings at the windows, and heavy bolts at the door.

The Juez Fiscal, attended by a single secretary, was seated at a small table with lights and writing materials, evidently in expectation of Don Beltràn's arrival. When his escort retired, and closed the door, the Juez (whose office nearly corresponds to that of a Judge-Advocate), read over to him a series of questions which had been previously prepared, demanding a direct and explicit answer to each in turn. This is in strict conformity to Spanish martial law, which receives a prisoner's confession, as the best and most conclusive testimony of innocence or guilt; indifferent whether he criminate himself, provided the ends of justice are answered by his avowal; and considering his refusal to reply to questions thus put, as an unequivocal proof of conscious guilt. After about an hour's close examination, the ministers of justice rose, and left Peñuela in no very enviable situation. Nevertheless, as not the slightest hint had been dropped relative to the intercepted correspondence, he flattered himself into a belief, that nothing but suspicion had as yet attached to him.

While he was ruminating on the charges, to which he considered himself most liable, and framing such answers, as he thought would best suit the character of conscious innocence, which he had determined to assume, he heard the jarring sound of the bolts by which his prison door was secured, and the officer who had arrested him in his house appeared, and commanded him to follow. Immediately on his leaving the room, two carbineers, who were in waiting, stepped forward; and placing themselves one on each side of him, proceeded with him to the Sala de Justicia. The gloominess of the spacious corridors, through which he had to pass, faintly lighted at each turning by a solitary lamp, and the hollow echoes which repeated the heavy tread of his conductors, struck considerable dismay into the heart of the prisoner. But, when the door of the Sala was thrown open, and he found himself in the presence of his judges, he was so appalled by the consciousness of his guilt, as to be totally unable to support his assumed character; and he hung his head before them, with the air of a self-convicted criminal.

After a pause, during which his guards withdrew, a commanding voice, which he recognized as that of General Miranda, directed him to advance to the foot of the table, and listen to the charges that had been brought, and were about to be substantiated against him. At this summons, he compelled himself to look up, and saw the long council board surrounded by officers of rank and consideration in the patriot army, with most of whom he was personally acquainted. This, however, instead of encouraging him, served but to embitter his present feelings of terror and confusion; for he knew them all to be enthusiastically attached to their country's cause, and enemies, "*to the knife*," of the party with which he had leagued himself. He saw the gaze of each individual fixed on him, with various expressions of contempt and detestation; and again cast his eyes on the ground, in shame and despair.

The Juez Fiscal, who was seated on a stool at the left hand of the President, then rose, in obedience to a sign made him by Miranda; and read, in a distinct voice, the questions which had been already put to Don Beltràn, and his answers. The prisoner was asked by the President, in the customary form, whether he wished to explain or retract any part of his declaration; and having answered in the negative, the deposition of the Cacique Pichiloncōy was read to him, in which the detention of the Indian messenger, and his confession of having been employed by the prisoner, were circumstantially detailed. Don Beltràn was again called on by Miranda to answer to this accusation. Believing that his written communication had escaped detection, he mustered resolution to look up, and exclaimed against the injustice of receiving such dubious evidence in a cause, on the result of which depended his life, and that which he held far dearer, his honour. He begged to remind the court, that the Cachirì tribe was notoriously in the habit of torturing the Guagívis, as often as any of that persecuted race fell into the hands of the former; and submitted, that an extorted confession of this nature, totally unsupported by proof, or collateral evidence of any description, ought not for a moment to weigh with the honourable court, against the character of a respectable citizen.

"Besides,"—said he, gradually gaining confidence as he proceeded, from the attention with which he was heard; "an Indian's oath is not admissible in any court of law; nor ought it to be considered deserving of credit, when opposed to the simple asseveration of a white man."

At these words, General Zaráza, the aged Guerilla chief, who was seated at the President's right hand, lost all patience, and exclaimed, regardless of the decorum usually observed on a court-martial, "Dares the traitor treat an Indian's word with contempt? What are we all, or what ought we to be, but Indians? I would to heaven we were half as true and honest as a nation! His very sentiments proclaim him to be a Godo."

Here Zaráza was interrupted by the President, who said, "*Poco á poco, camaráda!* the prisoner must on no account be interrupted in his defence. Perhaps he will explain to the court how it happens, that he has been enabled to divine the very tribe to which the intercepted messenger belonged. It was not once alluded to, if I mistake not, in the deposition which has just been read to him.

Peñuela immediately recollected the error, into which he had fallen, in the confusion of his defence. He attempted to explain it away, by saying, that on hearing the name of Pichiloncōy mentioned, and knowing his accuser to be a Cachirl, it was a natural supposition for him to make, that any prisoner, made by that Cazíque, must necessarily belong to the tribe with which his warlike nation was at constant variance. No remark was elicited from the court by this explanation; but Peñuela, who now watched with anxious vigilance the looks of his judges, augured but ill of its success, from the incredulous smile which he could discover on some of their lips.

The Juez Fiscal then handed him the envelope of a letter, directed to the Spanish General Monteverde at Cartagéna; and premising that the court had already carefully compared it with several manuscripts bearing his signature, which had been found in his study, demanded of him whether he acknowledged it to be his writing. He could not avoid owning, on examination, that the resemblance was striking; but boldly disclaimed all knowledge of its contents. At the same time, recollecting that the envelope which had been produced might possibly have been found in his house, and that in that case an unqualified denial would be prejudicial to his cause, he submitted to the court, that even if he had written on private business to a relation who was in the province of Coro, and had forwarded his letter under cover to the Spanish General,—as he might very innocently have done,—no one could with justice blame his conduct in that respect.

Lastly, the Juez Fiscal, having once more demanded if he had any explanation to give the court, on the subject of the heavy charge brought against him, and having received no answer, proceeded to read aloud, as the last and damning proof of treason, the intercepted letter which had been enclosed in the envelope. The prisoner started on hearing the first few words, and trembled so violently, that the President desired him to take a seat, and compose himself, so as to listen with attention to the document under consideration. The letter most completely established the truth of the Indian's testimony, and exposed Don Beltran's treason beyond a shadow of doubt. It contained accurate intelligence respecting the numerical force and disposition of the patriot troops, as well as important advice relative to an expedition which, it appeared, the royalists were preparing against Caraccas. It also referred to prior communications which had passed, proving, beyond a doubt, that this had not been his first essay in the dishonourable capacity of a spy. To crown the whole, although a feigned name had been affixed to the body of the letter. the full signature of Beltràn Peñuela was, by some strange but not unusual inadvertence of the writer, to be found at the close of a post-script.

When the Fiscàl had concluded, Miranda demanded of the prisoner, in the same calm unaltered tone, what he had to offer in his defence. Peñuela, starting as it were from a hideous dream, loudly reiterated his denial of the crime with which he was charged. He solemnly declared that the letter was a forgery, and asserted his innocence in incoherent expressions; while at the same time, with the usual inconsistency of guilt, he intreated for pardon, and supplicated the court, in the most abject terms, to be merciful to this his first offence.

When he was at length silent, exhausted by the violence of his emotions, the President rose, and informed him, that the court had already made up their minds as to his guilt. They had come to this conclusion, he said, principally by means of the letter, which they could not but consider an irrefragable proof, supported as it was by the evidence of his messenger, and his own vacillating declarations. He had been sent for to the Sala de Justicia, to give him an opportunity of explaining, had it been in his power, the unfavourable circumstances which appeared to condemn him; but he had, by his demeanour, left his judges without the shadow of a doubt, had it been possible for them to entertain one in his favour. Miranda advised him to consider, in the solitude of the dungeon to which he was about to be removed, whether he had any witnesses to call, or evidence to offer, which might avert the sentence that would otherwise be read to him the next day, after the ceremonies of the *fiesta* should have been celebrated.

The President then rang a small bell; the carbineers again entered, and conducted Don Beltràn through a corridor, which turned off at right angles from that by which he had been brought to the Sala. Having crossed a paved court, they came to a low iron-studded door, which was opened on his conductors giving the pass-word to some one within. The party entered, and Peñuela found himself in the interior of the *carcel*, which had been made, by the policy of the Spaniards, to communicate secretly with the Government house in every principal town and city.

The carceléro, a stout square-built Gallego, with sandy hair and a sinister expression of countenance, who had been continued in his employment, on the change of Government, in consequence of the repugnance of creoles to accepting the office, received Peñuela from the escort. He was preparing, with the alacrity of one who delights in the duties of his profession, to fit him with a ponderous pair of irons, when he was stopped by the officer who had hitherto accompanied Don Beltràn;—"Halt there, maëstro Rodil! no order has been issued for the prisoner to wear *grillos*. You are merely to confine him in a strong cell; and let it be as comfortable as possible."

"Midnight is no time for picking and chusing cells, Señor Oficial. The Hidalgo, if he be one, must be content with the first that is ready for him. I suppose it will be only for a night or so;—few who enter by that gate make any long stay here. But he may as well have his *esposas* rivetted on at once, to save trouble in the morning; for doubtless the order is only forgotten. Who ever heard of a criminal,— con su licencia!—sent from the palace by night, without being clapped into irons the moment he arrived?"

"Silence, Señor verdúgo! and do as you are ordered; if you wish to keep your own ancles free. Abùr, Don Beltran! I wish you well through your misfortunes."

The carceléro led the way with a torch to the cells, evidently mortified and incensed at the flagrant breach of prison etiquette of which he was reluctantly compelled to be guilty; and muttering the proverb which consoles a Spaniard under every species of forced submission;—

"*Do quieren los reyes.*,
"*Van las leyes!*"

Don Beltràn followed him down a flight of mouldering stone steps, leading to a range of subterranean dungeons, whose iron-studded doors were scarcely to be distinguished from the walls, on each side of a vaulted gallery; in the damp air of which the torch burned dim, as if about to expire. These, the jailor informed him, were formerly the state prisons, "quando el Rey," and had frequently been lent to the Inquisition, when the cells of the *Casa Santa* were occupied.

"But since this revolution," added he with a sigh, "these have generally been empty; and more is the pity, for they are the strongest and most compact dungeons I ever kept the keys of, except indeed the casas-matas at Bilbao in the old country."

So saying, he unlocked with difficulty the farthest in the whole range, and entered with the prisoner, whom despair and astonishment had hitherto kept silent. He then shook up some straw on a sort of rude stone couch that was built into the wall; and set himself to light a rusty lamp, which hung by a mouldering chain from the roof. While he was grumbling over the dampness of the wick, which baffled his endeavours to kindle it, Don Béltràn recovered from the state of stupor into which he had fallen, and earnestly entreated that he might be confined in a more habitable prison; or at least, that he might be removed to one above ground. He offered his jailor, at the same time, several doubloons, as the readiest means of enforcing his request; and Rodìl received them, as is usual among those of his profession, without the slightest acknowledgment, or visible relaxation in the stern rigid muscles of his countenance. When he had succeeded in lighting the lamp, he declared that nothing could possibly be done until the morning; but then—as he graciously promised,—he would remove him to the condemned cell in the upper prison. That, he said, was far more comfortable; being well ventilated, and provided with a brazero for the use of Fray Nicolás, who always confessed the prisoners before execution.

"Meanwhile," said he, "you must content yourself with this berth, which has afforded a night's lodging to many a worthy cavalléro, since I have had the honour to hold the office of carceléro. The last tenant at will was Don Jose Maria Palomárez,—he of the gold-mines of Béta-rica,—and he spent his time, short as it was, happily enough. *Caspiroléta!* he thought, because he had justice on his side, that he was sure to slip his neck out of the collar; so he refused to compromise the matter, notwithstanding the hints of the Audiencia; and was found guilty of being too rich to live. Take my advice, 'nor Beltràn! whatever scrape you have got into, be not too sparing of his majesty's pictures."

Having given the prisoner this piece of advice, which, it may be readily believed, was anything but disinterested, Rodìl kindled his cigarillo at the lamp, and disappeared, closing, double-locking, and bolting the dungeon door, with the usual superfluous and ostentatious accuracy. Don Beltrân, though he loathed his surly jailor's presence, half rose, as he closed the wicket, to call him back, for he felt that even his company would be preferable to his own thoughts. While he hesitated, Rodìl shut the grating at the head of the stone stairs, and cut off all further chance of society for that night.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONVENT CHAPEL.—THE EARTHQUAKE.

Nurse. "Shake, quoth the dove-house,—'twas no need I trow
"To bid me trudge."

Romeo and Juliet.

The morning of Holy Thursday was calm and cloudless, portending one of the hottest of the tropical summer days. The heavy mists, which had risen slowly from the cacao plantations, curled in white wreaths around the neighbouring hills, without a breath of air to disperse them, until they melted by degrees under the powerful rays of the sun. The city of Caraccas exhibited a scene of the gayest excitement and hilarity. A salute of artillery was fired at day-break, to announce the anniversary of the day that had for ever separated Venezuela from Spain; and the bells of the numerous churches and convents, which had commenced ringing at that signal, had not paused for a moment in the joyful *repíques*, that pealed from the belfry turrets in every possible tone and measure.

The streets of the capital were crowded with citizens in their holiday attire, mingled with campezános from the vallies of Aragoa, and Indians of different tribes, in their graceful many-coloured *ponchos* and *ruánas*. All these were mounted on their small but elegantly formed native horses, descended from the Andalusían breed, with which the first Spanish settlers stocked the country. The housings and trappings of these animals were as various as the costume of their riders. The Cerrános, or mountaineers, might be known by their stout active ponies, whose long projecting hoofs were well-calculated for climbing the Cordilléra; their lofty demi-pique saddles, covered with panther or jaguàr skins; and their ample embossed stirrups of wood or bronze, formed so as to protect the feet in rocky passes. The Llanéros, or men of the savannas, were mounted on nimble well-trained coursers, far taller and handsomer than the little shaggy mountain ponies. They used a light *fuste*, resembling a hussar's saddle-tree, covered with a fur chabraque, made either from the skin of the large red baboon, or of the wild asses' colt, jet black with a silvery white border; and their stirrups, steel or silver, of a triangular pattern, were barely large enough for the point of the sandal to enter.

The soldiers, belonging to the different regiments in garrison, were pouring out of their barracks, clad in new uniforms, and following their respective bands to the general parade ground on the Alaméda; in front of which the Huzares de Caraccas, the Lanzéros del Oriente, and the Artillería Volante, were already formed in line. As the hour drew near for the celebration of high mass in the different churches, the tumultuous repiques ceased by degrees; and the solemn tolling of the larger bells warned the inhabitants that the appointed time for devotion was at hand.

General Miranda, attended by his aides-de-camp, and followed by an escort of the Carabinéros de la Guardia, appeared on the Alaméda; and was received, as he rode slowly along the line, with presented arms, and the Venezuelan march played by all the bands. He called the Comandantes to the front, and gave them instructions as to the churches to which they were to march their men; informing those of the cavalry, that a temporary altar had been erected at the end of the Alaméda, at which the chaplain of the Junta would officiate for them, as they could not that day attend the churches, on account of being mounted. The troops filed off in different directions, and Miranda, attended by his staff, took his way to the principal square.

When they had given their horses to the orderlies who followed them, and were ascending the marble steps leading to the principal entrance of the cathedral, Carlos Sepúlveda took advantage of the crowd which had assembled to witness the ceremony of the anniversary, and escaping unobserved from the general whom it was his duty to attend, hastened down the street leading to the convent of Santa Clara. High mass had already begun, when he entered the small but richly adorned chapel; and he approached by degrees between the side pillars, until he stood so near the railing encircling the high altar, that he could distinctly see whatever passed behind the lattice-work on the right side of the chancel, which separated the veiled sisterhood from the strangers who filled the nave and aisles. The profusion of wax tapers, with which the inner choir was illuminated, enabled him to see the stately dignified figure of the Madre Abadéza, seated, in front of the nuns of her order, on a species of richly decorated throne; and on cushions, at her feet, were four youthful novices, who were that day to take the veil.

Close to the lattice, and in full view of the spectators, was placed the semblance of a funeral bier covered with black velvet, on which each novice was to be laid in turn during the chaunting of the "*Miserere;*" as a mournful intimation, to herself and all present, that she was from thenceforth to be considered as dead to the affections and pleasures of this world. The four Carracqueñas were equally lovely, and adorned with similar magnificence: Carlos, nevertheless, beheld but one, who looked as pale as monumental marble, and appeared unconsciously to listen to the solemn tones of the organ, and the melodious chaunt of those whom she was soon to embrace as sisters. A tear occasionally glittered on her cheek, and fell unheeded; but her thoughts were far from the convent, and with her father in his dungeon. If they sometimes wandered, unbidden, to him she was about to renounce for ever, it was only in the hope that his situation, with respect to Government, would enable him to plead successfully for her unfortunate parent. She knew not,—or how could she have preserved the semblance of resignation to her fate?—how little Don

Beltràn deserved any sympathy from her kinsman Carlos. But yet, if her father had deprived her of the consolation of knowing that by one, at least, she would be deeply regretted, his duplicity was mercy to her. For if there be one pang more keen than that inflicted by the sense of unrequited love, it is that which a generous heart feels, when it is forbid to return the affection with which it is sought.

The service of high mass was soon concluded; and the ceremony of consecrating the new nuns commenced. Sepúlveda's heart throbbed intensely, as he saw the abbess rise, and lead Maria del Rosario forward to the *atahúd.* Her bracelets, her necklace, and all her ornaments, were taken from her by turns, and laid aside as an offering to the shrine of Santa Clara; her hair was unbound, and fell in luxuriant beauty down her lovely neck. Carlos gazed in breathless agony, as the abbess grasped it, and prepared to cut off those flowing ringlets, for the least of which he would have given his life; when her hand was arrested by a hollow sound, as of distant thunder. It came nearer, and all present turned their shuddering gaze on each other; for they too well recognized the first symptoms of an approaching earthquake.

The assembled multitude was so far paralysed by alarm, that the first undulating motions were distinctly felt, before they made any attempt to retire from the chapel. Then suddenly recollecting themselves, they rushed towards the door in wild dismay, trampling under-foot the weak and aged, and those who were still kneeling at their devotions or in penance. Nevertheless, so rapidly did the dread convulsion of nature attain its height, that the walls began to rock, and the roof to fall in, before they could reach the open air. Amid the screams of the terrified devotees in the chapel, answered by those of the nuns in the choir, the roaring of the subterranean thunder, and the crush of falling towers, Sepúlveda thought only of her whom he had just been on the point of losing for ever. With a desperate effort, he seized and tore down the latticed screen, and caught up the fainting novice, as she lay insensible on the atahud. He staggered through the winding passages, while the heaving earth rose and fell beneath his tread; and reached the convent garden, just as the cloister sunk into a heap of ruins behind him. The fearful sound still continued, as though the force of mighty waters were rending the abyss asunder; crash pealed on crash, as the loftiest edifices first bowed beneath the awful power which shook the solid earth to its centre; while the groans of dying thousands mingled in dreadful unison with the shrieks of the terrified survivors. The air was obscured by clouds of dust, and the sky darkened by rising smoke, proceeding from the flames which had burst forth from the ruins of thatched cottages, that had shared the fate of the churches and palaces.

A momentary respite from the first violent concussions ensued; and Sepúlveda again raised his lovely charge, who had recovered for an instant, but to relapse into a still deeper swoon of terror. As he pursued his hazardous way towards his mother's house, which was in the open ground near the Alaméda, his blood was chilled by the sights of horror that he encountered at every step. Not a single building remained totally free from injury; and, near every church or convent, mangled bodies were lying senseless, or writhing in the agonies of death. Groups of wretched beings, of every age and condition, were crowded together in the centre of the squares and plazüélas; or were flying, they knew not whither, in the madness of despair, to meet the fate they dreaded under the tottering walls, which each slight shock served to overthrow.

Don Carlos at length succeeded, by means of extraordinary and persevering exertions, in gaining the Alaméda, over the ruins of houses, and through flower gardens, no longer fenced by walls, nor guarded with the care due to domestic retreats. The stone seats, on which Carracqueñas had listened to the Chinganera's minstrelsy the preceding evening, were laid low; and the broad gravel walk was rent into numerous fissures, which gaped to a fearful depth. Sepúlveda hurried through the crowd, without attracting any attention by the singularity of his appearance; although his forehead was bleeding profusely from a cut, which he had received by the fall of a fragment of the convent roof, and a female with dishevelled hair, in the white dress of a novice, was lying apparently lifeless in his arms. But those who met him were mothers, calling in tones of agony for their children; and wives, distractedly seeking for their husbands.

As he approached his home, and saw the shattered roof and ruined walls of what had been a neat cottage, he thought for the first time with terror on his mother. Had she escaped? or had he her loss to lament? A moment more and he was in the garden, where he faltered thanks to heaven, on seeing Doña Gertrùdes and her brother on their knees in the act of devotion. She had been so deeply affected by parting with her protegée that morning, that she had found herself incapable of remaining to witness the ceremony of her taking the veil; and had therefore returned home from the convent immediately after the service of *La Alva.* Don Gabriáno, her brother, owed his safety, in all probability, to his having been appointed to perform mass for the cavalry in the open air.

They turned, on hearing Sepúlveda enter the garden, and his mother rushed into his arms. He committed his recovered treasure to her care, briefly relating the circumstances under which he had saved her life; and then took his leave, declaring his anxiety for the fate of his general, and the troops which were in the churches during the earthquake. As he hastened away, he once more reminded his mother, that the novice had not yet pronounced the irrevocable vows.

CHAPTER VI.

SEDITIOUS FRIARS.—AN INSURRECTION.

And more t' augment the flame,,
and rancour of their harte,
The friers of their counsells vile
to rebells doe imparte:
Thus friers are the cause,
the fountain and the spring,
Of hurleburles in the land,
of eche unhappie thing.

Derrick.

As Sepúlveda returned through the ruined streets of the city, he found that the Rotozos,—the Lazzaroni of South America,—had taken advantage, as usual, of the general confusion that prevailed; and had formed themselves into regular organized bands. for the purpose of depredation. Emboldened by their rage for plunder, they were already ransacking the tottering houses, and adding to the horrors of the scene of devastation, by the ferocity with which they strove against each other for the spoil, or united in offering the most desperate opposition to those inhabitants who attempted to rescue their property.

When he reached the Plaza mayor, he found the cathedral and palace, as he had anticipated, piles of ruins; but could see none of the troops which had marched by that morning, in all the pomp and circumstance of a festal day. The elevated platform in front of the cathedral was occupied, at several points, by bearded Capuchin friars, whose order was almost exclusively filled by European Spaniards, and was consequently decidedly inimical to the cause of the patriots. They were haranguing with loud vociferation, enforced by violent and theatrical gestures, a mixed assemblage of citizens and peasants, who were listening with attention, and evident interest, to their enthusiastic and inflammatory exhortations.

Sepúlveda could distinguish, among other exclamations of these agitators, those of "*Viva el Rey!*" "*Abajo los insurgentes!*" &c., which were re-echoed from different parts of the assembled multitude; and enquired of a wounded soldier, who had crept from beneath the ruins to the fountain in the centre of the square, what this commotion meant, and where the general was. He learned that Miranda and his staff, with the greater part of the detachment of carbineers which were in the cathedral, had made their escape into the Plaza, on feeling the first shock of the earthquake; but that the Capuchins and Franciscans had immediately commenced haranguing the panic-struck multitude, on the signal interposition of Providence, in selecting the anniversary of the revolution in Venezuela, as the day of punishment to that nation, for the crime of rebellion against its lawful sovereign. The wounded man said, that Colonel Simon Bolivar, at the head of the surviving carbineers, had attempted to disperse the assembly; but that on his striking with the flat of his sabre one of the most audacious of the Capuchins, the mob had been incensed to such a pitch of frenzy, as to drive the military out of the Plaza with stones and cuchillos. He recollected having heard Miranda direct the troops, on ordering them to disperse, to rendezvous in the Egído, and to bring with them all their fellow-soldiers, either of infantry or cavalry, whom they should meet on the way.

As he spoke, Sepúlveda found that one of the friars had perceived him, and had pointed him out to the audience he was haranguing, as an object of vengeance. The infuriate mob immediately burst into exclamations of "*Muera el rebelde!*"—"*Maten al chocúto!*" and were proceeding to execute their sanguinary threats, by throwing stones and other missiles, when Don Carlos caught a cavalry horse, which was drinking at the fountain, by the bridle, and hastily mounting, galloped off towards the Egído. He was repeatedly compelled to deviate from the direct road, for the purpose of avoiding the parties of rioters who were rambling about the streets. They were armed with the muskets and bayonets of the unfortunate soldiers, who had perished under the ruins of the churches and barracks, or had been intercepted and massacred, in their flight to the open country, by the ferocious mob of the enthusiasts; and were headed by fanatic friars, who stimulated them to the slaughter of all such as refused to join in their rallying cry of "*El Rey! ỳ la Fè!*"

Sepúlveda found the open suburb, known by the name of *El Egido*, a scene of confusion, forming a melancholy contrast to the appearance usually offered by the same spot of ground, on former field days. Then, the soldier-like appearance of the numerous corps, composed of tall active creoles, inspired confidence into the citizens of Caraccas; who used to throng around, and watch with pride and admiration their proficiency in military manœuvres. But now, the skeleton regiments which appeared there, disordered by the unequal numbers of their companies, and the irregular sizing of their ranks, resembled the first muster of a defeated army after a rapid retreat. It was also observable, by an experienced spectator, that in many instances subalterns were commanding battalions; and serjeants, or civilians in plain clothes, were doing officers' duty; so numerous were the "killed, wounded, and missing." The cavalry and artillery alone appeared to have sustained little or no loss; and were evidently prepared to repel an apprehended attack. The lancers and hussars had taken open order, at the further end of the small plain, and were standing at their horses' heads, waiting for the order to mount; and a slow-match, which was burning behind each light field-piece, showed that the artillery was also in readiness to act at a moment's warning.

Miranda was busily engaged dictating despatches to two or three officers, who sat on the ground doing the duty of secretaries; and he delivered them, as they were written and signed, to orderly dragoons, who were waiting to convey them to different garrison towns throughout the republic. Colonel Bolívar, as field-officer of the day, was receiving reports from the respective regiments formed around, and ordering pickets to be stationed at such points of the outskirts, as he considered most necessary to be guarded. At a little distance, groups of citizens,— *gente de paz*,—who were all more or less implicated in the declaration of independence, and had therefore very sufficient motives for dreading a counter-revolution, listened with consternation to the shouts of the riotous multitude in the city; and whispered to each other with looks of the deepest dejection, as they turned their eyes on the sadly diminished array of the patriot army.

Sepúlveda's appearance was scarcely noticed, except by a silent grasp of the hand, as he passed any of his intimate friends; so fully occupied was every one with the preparations necessary to be made on the spur of the moment, to crush the unexpected insurrection, or at least to hold out in the Egído, until the arrival of reinforcements from other parts of the confederate provinces. Among those who surrounded Miranda, were Lorenzo Tovàr, and his Indian friend Pichiloncōy, waiting for passports to return to La Guayra. The former joined Sepúlveda; and expressed his joy at finding that he had escaped the fate, which had befallen so many thousands of their companions in arms.

"By the way," said he, "what think you now of my compadre's warning last night? The Chinganera, too, was right; and I am inclined to believe that there is something after all, in their pretensions to witchcraft, more than is usually supposed. But tell me, camarada, how you had the good fortune to escape? for I saw nothing of you in the Plaza, when the mob rose at the instigation of those rascally monigótes, and drove us before them with sticks and stones. And yet I well remember you was close to me, when we dismounted at the cathedral door, just before mass."

Sepúlveda briefly informed him, that he had been induced by curiosity to attend mass at the chapel of the Monjas Claras, where he had been so fortunate as to save the life of the novice, whom they had seen the night before on the Alaméda. He also accounted for his farther delay, by mentioning his having conveyed her to his mother's house.

" You are a lucky fellow, amigo Carlos!" said Tovàr; " I never in my life had an opportunity of signalizing my knight-errantry, although I seldom miss an Alaméda, or a bull fight, if there happens to be one in the neighbourhood of my quarters; whereas you cannot attend mass at an obscure convent chapel, without encountering an adventure. I sincerely hope, for your sake, that Don Beltràn may expiate his treason, on the old Spanish gibbet in the Recovéco, as soon as Caraccas is a little more quiet; unless, indeed, the earthquake has already cheated the hangman of his fee, as is most probable. You will then have a clear stage and no favour; as, of course, I take it for granted that the father is the only obstacle, according to the established rules in every romance of real or imaginary life."

" *Mil gracias, companero!* but allow me to hope my future father-in-law,—since you will have it so, —may meet with better fortune. Meanwhile, tell me what Miranda has determined on; and whether he designs to let those Godo friars and their turbulent followers keep possession of the capital. The consequences will be serious, should Monteverde receive intelligence of the schism in La Patria."

"No fear of that, Sepùlveda;—Miranda has despatched couriers to Valencia, Vitoria, and Barquizimeto, to order up troops to his assistance; and El tahita Zaráza has galloped off to collect his Guerilleros from the vallies of Aragoa. The old general vows that on his return he will not leave a single *cogóte-raspádo* [19] to preach sedition in the country; and Bolívar complains bitterly of our not joining him to cut down the monigotes, who were haranguing the mob to day in the Plaza. He insists on it, that Venezuela must be cleared of *corónas* and *cerquillos*, [20] before we can expect any thing like tranquillity among us."

Here Tovàr was called forward to receive his passport; and Miranda observing Sepúlveda in conversation with him, directed Don Carlos to set off immediately for La Guayra, and to bring him back a particular statement from the military governor, of the condition in which the port and garrison were, in the event of its being necessary to retire thither from the capital. The two friends lost not a moment in taking the road to the coast, and soon passed the suburbs at a rapid pace, attended by the Cazíque Pichiloncõy; who gazed in silence, and with his usual air of melancholy gravity, on the groups of women and children seated by the road side. The mothers were viewing with sorrowful resignation their ruined cottages; while their children, unconscious of the extent of their loss, were playing about over the fallen walls, evidently pleased at the novelty of their situation, and delighted at the prospect of sleeping and living under the fruit-trees in their gardens.

After several hours riding at so rapid a rate, as to render conversation almost impossible, they reached the mountain pass half way between Caraccas and La Guayra As their horses were fatigued, and had been without food all the day, the travellers agreed to rest for awhile at the Tambo [21] on the summit of the mountain. This had been converted, of late years, into an inn for the accommodation of travellers. A sign, which used formerly to swing over the door, but had been laid prostrate by the effects of the earthquake, announced in large letters, and provincial Spanish,—

"POZADA PARA XENTE XTIANA
Y VESTIALIDAD."

CHAPTER VII.

THE INN.—THE CAZIQUE'S TALE.

Down from their seats the horsemen sprung,
With jingling spurs the court-yard rung;
They bind their horses to the stall,
For forage, food, and firing call,
And various clamour fills the hall;
Weighing the labour with the cost,
Toils every where the bustling host.

Marmion.

On riding into the inn-yard, the travellers could see, at the first glance, that the ravages of the earthquake had not been confined to the capital. The mud walls of the posáda were cracked in several places from top to bottom, although too low and solid to be overthrown; and the roof of the dwelling-house, as well as that of the stables and other offices, had fallen partly within, partly outside the walls. The corrál, or cattle pen, had been broken down by a drove of bullocks, which were confined there, and had been so terrified by the earthquake, as to break their way through the enclosure; and the goats belonging to the farm had established themselves on the ruins of the buildings, where they were feasting on the palm-leaf thatch.

The owner of the mountain inn, a corpulent elderly mulatto, was seated on a heap of pack-saddles, smoking his churumbéla, and gazing indolently on the setting sun, which was sinking into a dense bank of livid clouds;—an unusual and portentous spectacle, at this time of year, in a climate where the weather changes only at each equinox. The peons of the inn were enjoying the supreme bliss of idleness, in imitation of their master. Some were lounging on skins, comfortably wrapped up in their ponchos; and others had assembled round a game of *paro ý pinto* with dice, in which the by-standers apparently took at least as much, if not more, noisy interest than those who were playing.

" *Caspiroléta!* mine host," cried Tovàr, " you take things coolly. Some maiz, and grass for our horses, and that quickly, for we are in haste."

" *No hay mäiz! No hay alfalfa!*" drawled out the imperturbable host, and applied himself again to his pipe."

" Barley, then;—or chopped straw, if you have nothing better."

" *No hay cebáda! No hay pája!*" groaned the lazy mountaineer.

" What hast thou then in thine inn? *hijo de la grandísima*—" cried Tovàr, beginning to lose patience, as the indolent host persisted in his denials.

" *No hay náda!*" was the comprehensive answer.

" *Perro mestizo!*" exclaimed Tovàr, half drawhis sabre, " I will teach thee to trifle with officers on government duty!" and was proceeding to put his threat in execution, by beating him soundly with the flat, when his hand was held by the Indian, who interposed with—"Poco á poco, compadre Lorenzo! I know maëstro Bautista Nuñez will oblige me, for old acquaintance sake. Dost thou remember me, 'ñor Bautista? Or must I pay thee a visit some winter night, at the head of my Cachiris, to refresh thy recollection? This is a lonely mountain pass for an inn, amigo! Remember that the *tambo*, which once stood here, was the work of my tribe."

"What! art thou there, Cazíque Pichiloncöy? Why didst thou not speak at first, man? Here, Pancho! Pépe! Tadéo! ye lazy knaves;—take the horses from these cavalléros; and reach me a crow-bar: I must break through the back wall of the stable, to get straw and barley. Do thou Perrúcho, kill a kid, and bruise some maiz, for bread. There is plenty of chicha[2] in the house, if the earthquake have not broken the jars."

So saying, the host bustled about with more alacrity than his corpulence appeared to promise; and the name of Pichiloncöy produced a similar effect on the peons. They started to their feet, girt their ponchos round their waists, and stumbled over each other in their eagerness to receive the horses. While preparations were making for the travellers' meal, Carlos, Lorenzo, and their Indian companion lighted their cigars, and strolled to the brow of the hill, which commanded a most extensive and varied prospect. Behind them they had left the valley of Caraccas, thickly spread with cane and cacao plantations, which were darkening in the shades of evening; while on the horizon to the north, was seen the Carribéan sea, gilded with the last rays of the setting sun.

As they sat here, enjoying the cool evening breeze, Tovar laughingly complimented his Indian friend on his address in managing the inn-keeper, who was well known on that road, as a more intractable brute than any one of his mules;—in short, a genuine zambo;—and enquired how he had contrived to acquire such influence over him. The Cazíque replied, that the story contained nothing very new or interesting; but that if they desired to hear it, he would relate it while their host was preparing supper.

THE CAZIQUE'S TALE.

"The tambo of Aynepan was founded on this mountain by my ancestors, many ages before the white men introduced their inhospitable inventions of inns and taverns, where the rich alone can find food or shelter. The tribe of Cachiris, as being the most noble, had from time immemorial the charge of all public resting places in the district of Coquibacóa, now called Venezüela. Twice every year, immediately before and after the season of rains, the tribe used to assemble and hold a feast in each of the tambos by turns. At such times they used to repair the thatch and walls, make earthen ollas and water pitchers, and provide dried deers' flesh and fuel for the use of travellers.

"I can well remember the last of these merry meetings held on this hill; although I was then but a boy. My grandsire Pichimandúra assembled nearly a thousand of his tribe; whereas I could now scarcely muster two hundred fighting Cachiris, between the sea and the Cordilléra. But he was well aware that it was destined to be the last feast of the kind, and he resolved that it should be the most famous that had been seen in the country. Cattle were by no means so numerous in Coquibacóa at that time as they are now; nevertheless he bought forty bullocks in the plains below Ortiz, and killed them himself for the tribe on this very spot of ground. Antelopes and vicuñas, on the contrary, were far more abundant then; and we had fifty or more of them roasted whole that day.

"As my grandsire had foreseen, the Governor of Caraccas sent an alcalde up to our tambo, escorted by a strong party of cavalry, to warn the tribe against any future assemblies on this mountain; for a posáda was to be built where our tambo then stood. When the alcalde had read the proclamation, Pichimandúra explained it to his people; for few of us, in those days, would stoop to learn a foreign language. The Cachiris rose up as one man, and declared that they would never suffer their tambo to be injured, threatening to destroy any building whatever which the white men should venture to erect there; but my grandsire commanded silence, and obliged my father first, and after him the rest of the tribe, to swear by his head, that they would offer no resistance to the decree of the Spanish Government.

"The tambo was accordingly pulled down, and the posáda was erected in its place, and put up for sale to the highest bidder at Caraccas. A Gallego, by name Diego Alarcòn, was the first occupier of the inn; and, although our tribe looked on him at first with an evil eye, he behaved for some years in so friendly a manner, that we could find no pretence for resenting his intrusion. Bautista Nuñez, the zambo who now keeps the inn, was at that time a lad employed as mozo de mulas to the posáda; and well remembers that his master used every year to feast the Cazíque, and several elders of the tribe, on the days which were previously set apart for repairing the tambo. Alarcòn, moreover, then never refused shelter and refreshment to any of our nation, who happened to be benighted on the mountain. But as his wealth increased, his avarice incited him to close his doors against his Indian friends. He first discontinued the annual feasts, which he had been in the habit of giving; and came by degrees to refuse even food and shelter to travellers, unless they were such as could pay for his hospitality.

"Our warriors again proposed to destroy the posáda; but my grandsire constantly opposed their design, and exhorted them rather to despise such ungenerous conduct, than to punish it. As for himself, he would never stop to rest here, when obliged to pass this mountain on a journey; but invariably passed on to the low country, lest he might appear to solicit assistance from the churlish host. One rainy season, however, when he was become feeble and decrepid through extreme age, he was on his way from the sea-coast to the vallies, with no attendant but myself, then a youth of seventeen, to carry his grass hammock, and his alforjas with provisions. He was suddenly taken ill, just as we had reached this pass of the mountain; it rained heavily at the time; and, as the old man had been for some months ailing, I strove to persuade him to seek shelter at the posáda; but he would not hear of it. I wrapped him in his poncho and mine, and having laid him under the shelter of that shelving rock, I sat down close to him, waiting anxiously for day-light, and the arrival of some of our tribe who were on the road, that they might assist me to carry him to the nearest friendly hut.

" The wind blew keenly from the North; and a thunder-storm burst with all its wintry violence on the mountain. As I held the aged Cazíque in my arms, I could distinguish his countenance at intervals by the blue flashes of lightning; and saw the cold damps of death gathering on his brow. I thought it too hard for him to die unsheltered, like a houseless dog, with the ruins of the tambo of his ancestors so near; and regardless of his injunctions. I laid him softly down, and flew to the posáda, where I knocked loud and long, until the Gallégo rose and inquired, who was there at that late hour. I answered, that the Cazíque Pichimandúra was on the mountain, and demanded shelter from the storm; for I could not bring myself to beg his life, as it were, from a Spaniard, by describing the extremity he was in. Alarcôn scornfully ordered me to begone; saying, that he kept no lodgings for wandering Indians. If the life of my whole tribe had depended on it, I could not have again pleaded for admission; so I turned my back on the posada, and hurried to the rock where I had left my grandsire. The old man lay so still, that I at first believed he slept; but when I took his hand, I felt it was too deadly cold for that of a living being. It dropped heavily from me; and I knew that Pichimandúra was no more.

" My father was then in the forest of Curunaquèl, with the rest of his family; and I determined to carry my grandsire thither without delay. Although he had formerly been accounted the tallest and stoutest warrior of his tribe, he was shrunk by old age and disease to a skeleton; so that, when I had carefully shrouded him in his ruána, I raised him with ease on my shoulders, and set off on my journey to the forest. Caraccas was not so extensive a city in those days as it now is. I passed round it with ease before day-break, and lay hid in a quebráda,[23] on the other side of the suburbs, lest any one might meet me on the road, and see the Cazíque of the Cachirìs carried to the grave, without a bier or attendance. When I reached my father's hut, on the following night, I entered in silence, and laid the corpse on my father's bed. There was no time to be lost; I therefore returned immediately, in search of as many Cachirìs as I could collect at so short a warning; and when I appeared at day-break, at the head of a hundred warriors, we found a grave already dug beneath the roof, which had so often sheltered the Cazíque when living, and was now to be his temporary abode after death.[24]

" When he was laid in the earth, I hastened to console my father, and the warriors who were pre sent, by the prospect of vengeance, which my relation of Alarcòn's conduct to the old Cazíque suggested; and we immediately set off, with the clay of the grave on our foreheads, for the posada which had risen on the ruins of our tambo. Notwithstanding my precautions to avoid observation, I had been seen the preceding night on the road, with my grandsire's corpse on my shoulders. The Gallégo had been informed of the circumstance; and his conscience warned him to expect a fearful retribution at the hands of the tribe. He had therefore solicited and obtained the assistance of soldiers from the garrison at Caraccas, and had concealed them in the outhouses; so that when my father, at the head of his warriors, commenced an attack on the posáda, a volley of musketry stretched him and several others mortally wounded on the ground. My father exclaimed, with his last breath, "Firmes, Cachirìs! revenge your Cazíque!"

"Some of us had fortunately brought with us our bows and arrows. We surrounded the posáda, sheltering ourselves as we best could behind rocks and walls, from the deadly aim of the soldiers, which we had no means of returning; and wrapping pieces of lighted *yezca* round the points of our arrows, we shot them into the palm-leaf thatch. The mountain breeze soon fanned the *yezca* matches into a blaze: and, as the inmates of the house attempted to escape, we brought them down with our unerring reeds, and knocked them on the head with our war clubs. They died, to a man, except the zambo youth. He, though severely scorched, escaped through the circle of warriors, to the spot where I knelt examining my father's wounds; and clasping my knees, implored mercy in my father's name.

"I spared his life, and saved him from the unsatisfied vengeance of the tribe, by adopting him as a brother on the spot. He lived in my family some years; and, as no one ventured to occupy the tambo after our signal vengeance on the Gallégo and his household; I advised Bautista Nuñez to offer himself to Government as ventéro. I lent him a sufficient sum, from the treasure of the tribe, which was now at my disposal as Cazíque, to set him up in the inn; and, although surly and disobliging to others, he has never been known to turn an Indian from his door."

As Pichiloncōy concluded his tale, the ventéro appeared with several of his peons, bearing joints of roast kid on wooden spits, which they planted upright in the turf, before the travellers. Then laying an undressed deer-skin on the ground, they covered it with roasted plantains and aracacha roots, together with arepas of yellow maiz. Bautista himself brought a capacious calabash full of fermented cane juice, with three neatly carved cocoa-nut goblets; and retired with his peons, leaving his guests to enjoy themselves undisturbed.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DUNGEON.—THE CONFESSOR.—THE ESCAPE.

Bottom.—" The raging rocks,
" And shivering shocks,
" Shall break the locks
" Of prison gates !"
Midsummer-night's dream.

THE jailor had been mindful of his promise to DonBeltràn, and had removed him from the subterranean *bóvedas* to a comparatively comfortable cell, which was, however, by no means so well ventilated as Maëstro Rodil had boasted. The only aperture, by which air was admitted, was a small window about a foot square, situated so far from the ground, that a prisoner from within could see nothing whatever outside it, except the deep blue tropical skies, and the palm-trees in the adjoining Dominican convent garden. It was, moreover, almost totally closed by the massive iron grating, which secured it, apparently, against all possibility of being forced.

Contrary to the jailor's expectation,—if not hope,—no order had as yet arrived for the prisoner to be fettered. Peñuéla continued to pace his narrow cell, in melancholy meditation, on the sentence which he dreaded, but saw no means of averting. One while, he muttered imprecations on the carelessness of his Indian messenger, in falling into the Cachirís' ambush; and the next moment he listened, in breathless and torturing anxiety, to the frequent grating of dungeon doors; while fancy anticipated the arrival of the Juez Fiscàl, who was to read the sentence of the court-martial.

The merry ringing of the church bells reached his prison; but were far from dispelling the gloom that oppressed his spirits. He reflected how little sympathy the busy world without had with him; and shuddered at the idea, that even so would they ring, when the sentence of the court had been executed on him in its fullest rigour. This, however, he could scarcely as yet bring himself seriously to contemplate. Immediately after the bells had commenced tolling for mass, he heard the sound of heavy footsteps approaching his cell; and he felt himself turn pale, as the key slowly turned in the rusted lock. He again breathed more freely, on perceiving that the visitor, whom the jailor ushered in, was not the thin, ascetic Fiscàl, but the portly Dominican, Fraÿ Nicolas, whom he had long known intimately, and who was universally welcome throughout Caraccas;—except, indeed, when he came in his present capacity of confessor to the jail.

"Ave Maria, son Beltràn!" he exclaimed, "can this be you? I had no idea, when niño Rodil came for me to the convent this morning, that so dear a friend as you could be in want of spiritual consolation; otherwise I would have made more haste. But come, my son! be not cast down. You know the old refran says.

'A todos la muerte
'Les viene de suerte!'

and you should therefore take every reverse of fortune philosophically, as you see me do. I have parted, in this very cell, with many a dear friend, who has been led out in pursuance of his sentence; but I thank my patron, Santo Domingo, that I have never lost sight of my equanimity, on any such trying occasion. My motto is

'Siempre parádo
'A qualquier estado;'

and let it also be yours, my son. You know not what consolation it will afford you on any unforeseen emergency."

As worthy Fray Nicolas was proceeding in this strain of well-meant consolation, and was more particularly insisting on the absolute necessity of being at all times resigned, and prepared for the worst, the hollow roaring of the earthquake, speedily followed by a concussion which shook the prison to its foundation, interrupted the self-complacency of his harangue. He tottered to the door, as fast as his agitation and the vibratory motion of the earth would permit; and, finding that the jailor had double locked the cell, on leaving him to his tête a tête with the prisoner, he made the most violent efforts to burst his way. Finding that it was in vain, he strained his voice, in unison with Don Beltràn, to make himself heard by the jailor; and alternately ejaculated,—"Ave Maria purísima! Misericordia Señor!" together with the less orthodox, but equally sincere exclamations of "Abrid la puerta, hijo Rodil, con cien demonios! Abrid me,—perro verdúgo!"

Rodil, however, was far enough out of hearing. He had fled precipitately into the Plaza at the first alarm, and, with the usual recklessness of a jailor, had left his unhappy prisoners to their fate. The solid masonry of the carcel resisted for some moments the violence of the earthquake; but by degrees, the walls began to give away in various parts, either falling in on the helpless inmates of the cells, or outwards into the courts of the prison. As the repeated crashes were heard by Fray Nicolas, who had thrown himself on the dungeon floor, exhausted by his previous exertions, he exclaimed, "*Malhaya* that monster of iniquity, who has left me here to perish! and malhaya mil veces my own folly, in trusting myself within the walls of a prison on any account whatever! A silver candlestick,—two candlesticks of solid silver do I vow to Santo Domingo! let me but escape in safety from this extremity of danger."

Don Beltràn, meanwhile, was by no means free from serious apprehensions; for callous indeed must be the heart, which sinks not at the appalling scene displayed by an earthquake such as this. Yet the agony of his previous state of suspense, while in momentary expectation of the arrival of his sentence, was so intolerable, that any change of circumstances was welcomed as a reprieve. Even this awful convulsion of nature was, to him, far preferable to the stillness of his solitary cell, with the attendant horrors of reflection on approaching death, by the hands of the executioner. A ray of doubtful hope gleamed through his mind, on hearing the fall of the adjoining walls; and it brightened into exultation, as he saw the arch of the dungeon window give way and fall outwards, together with the iron grating which had been interposed between him and liberty. Without a moment's delay, he dragged the heavy table from the centre of the cell, where it stood, to the wall beneath the window; springing hastily on it, he forced himself through the opening, regardless of the imminent danger of being crushed, in his passage, by falling stones and rubbish. Fray Nicolas eagerly called on his former *penitente* to assist him in making his escape; but Don Beltràn turned a deaf ear to his confessor's entreaties. Letting himself drop into the inner court of the prison, he passed unchallenged through the gateway, which Rodil had omitted to secure, and mingled with the crowd in the Plaza.

Far different were Peñuela's feelings, at that moment, from those of the affrighted multitude. He scarcely heard their piercing cries of "Misericordia!" he scarcely noticed the ruined buildings, which were even then falling around him. His thoughts were occupied by his miraculous preservation from an ignominious death, by the very means which had made so many widows and orphans in the same moment of time. He could scarcely believe that his escape was anything but a dream, until he unexpectedly found himself close to Miranda, so lately his judge; but who now, awe-struck by the calamitous event, which had converted the anniversary of triumph into a day of mourning, either saw him not, or wasted not a thought on him as he passed. Don Beltràn was aroused, by this rencontre, to a sense of the necessity for his immediate concealment, and flight from Caraccas, nay even from Venezuela, if it were practicable. He therefore hurried, through the most unfrequented streets, towards the Calle de los Capuchínos, with the intention of securing as much gold and other valuables as he could conveniently carry away; and then, of making his escape from some of the small ports on the coast, to the Havana, or any West Indian island to which he could most readily obtain a passage.

When he reached his house, he stood for some moments as it were panic-struck, and scarcely capable of recognising it, so completely was it reduced to ruins. Although he might have been prepared for such a sight, by the universal destruction he had witnessed elsewhere, it had made scarce any impression on his mind, occupied as it was with exultation for his escape. As he made his way with difficulty through the corridors, towards a subterranean apartment in which he kept his iron chest, he was surprised to see his son Joaquin's horse standing saddled in the inner court; and a stout carriage mule, with a baggage *enxalma,* tied to one of the orange trees. He listened, in expectation of hearing voices, supposing that the Rotózos had already found their way hither in search of plunder. Hearing nothing, however, he was proceeding to disinter his concealed treasure; when he distinguished the heavy blows of a hammer, echoing along the deserted corridors. He advanced to the entrance of the vaulted closet, and looking in, saw his son Joaquin busily employed in the endeavour to burst open the lid of the iron chest.

Young Peñuela started on seeing his father; but immediately explained to him that, supposing him to be still in the prison, he had thought it expedient to remove the property as soon as possible to a place of security. This, he observed, was doubly necessary, both as a precaution against robbers, and against confiscation by order of the Junta, which there was sufficient reason to apprehend. Don Beltràn commended his prudence, but intimated his desire that the chest itself should be conveyed to a solitary ravine in the neighbourhood of the city; and disclosed his design of escaping from the mainland as soon as possible. He therefore sought out his most important papers, and a casket of valuable jewels, which were concealed in a private recess in the vault. Having secured them in the chest, he placed it on the mule with his son's assistance, and lashed it tightly to the pack-saddle with a halter that lay near; covering it carefully from the curiosity of passengers, with an *almofrez* of tanned hide. The staircase, leading to the rooms above, had fallen in; but Don Beltràn contrived to reach the upper corridor, with the assistance of a bambu ladder, which he brought from the out-houses. Having entered the bed-rooms, he filled two travelling trunks with his own clothes, mingled indiscriminately with those of his son and daughter, and lowered them by a rope into the court-yard. He then ordered his son to bring another mule and horse from the garden, whither they had all escaped on the falling of the stable; which, however, being a mere bambu shed, had not injured them materially. When he had loaded the second mule, he disguised himself in a peon's poncho, which he found in the corridor; and, mounting his horse, took the road to the country, leading the mules, and followed by his son.

It was nearly sunset before they reached the retired *quebráda*, in which Don Beltràn proposed to conceal his treasure until his departure. After unloading the mules, and depositing the iron chest in the bushes, he directed Joaquin to remain there until his return. He then rode to Caraccas in quest of provisions for their journey; as well as to make enquiries concerning the fate of his daughter.

He was determined to make her a companion of his flight, provided she had not yet taken the veil; and this he believed by no means improbable, considering the time at which the earthquake occurred; for it must, in all likelihood, have interrupted the ceremony of initiation. For this purpose, he rode, directly on reaching Caraccas, to the house of Doña Gertrùdes; who, he concluded, would be more capable than any other person of giving him the required information.

He found that a temporary shed had been erected, with the assistance of the neighbours, in the garden among the fruit trees; and had been rendered as comfortable as possible, under existing circumstances, by such articles of furniture, belonging to the house, as had escaped damage. Don Gabriàno, the chaplain, who not only considered himself in peril from the fanatic followers of the royalist monks, but was also apprehensive that his presence might endanger his sister, had fled to the army in the Egído. Miranda had formed a bivouac there; and had been joined by the members of Government, and all civilians who were favourably inclined to the cause of La Patria.

Doña Gertrudes and her protegée ran eagerly out of the shed, on hearing the trampling of a horse in the garden, supposing Don Carlos had returned; but they paused on seeing Peñuela, whom they scarcely knew under his disguise. He thanked his kinswoman, drily and formally, for the care she had taken of his daughter; and declared that his object, in disturbing her at that unseasonable hour, was to relieve her of a burthen, which must necessarily be embarrassing to her, in the present state of the country.

"Surely," said Doña Gertrudes, "you will not separate us! Whatever may be your views for yourself, your daughter can be no where safer than with me. Far be it from me to advocate disobedience in a child; but at her age she requires a mother's care, and permit me, at least until more favourable circumstances,—"

"It is impossible, Doña Gertrudes!" interrupted Peñuela; "the arbitrary and tyrannical conduct of the existing government renders it inexpedient for me to reside in Venezüela; and I think it my duty to take my children with me, wherever I may wander, that they may be educated in the principles of loyalty, which could never be instilled into them here. When my native land returns to its allegiance,—and I trust the time is not far distant,—I may again re-visit it; but not until then. Meanwhile, you must excuse me, if I insist on preserving that subordination in my own family, which, I grieve to say, has been completely subverted throughout Venezuela."

Maria del Rosario heard with sorrow, but with acquiescent humility, his determination thus arrogantly asserted; and tears, which she in vain strove to repress, flowed fast as she turned to embrace Doña Gertrudes. While Peñuela went in search of a pillion for his daughter, she gave vent to her feelings without restraint. Her kind friend, although deeply spmpathising in her affliction, reminded her of the necessity of obeying her father's will without a murmur; and encouraged her to hope for a speedy meeting, under happier circumstances. She failed in her attempt to console her; but succeeded in calming her agitation, and enabling her, on her father's return, to prepare to accompany him with composure, and little apparent reluctance.

The females of South America then invariably made use of pillions on a journey; and the custom is still continued in many parts of that country. Maria del Rosario was therefore mounted in this manner behind her father, closely muffled in a capote; and soon found herself, for the first time, in the lonely environs of the city after night-fall. Don Beltràn spurred forward in silence; and in a short time left the level high-road, and crossed the uneven country towards the ravine, in which he had left his son Joaquin. The moon was rising; otherwise it would have been difficult, even for an experienced guide, to have found the way, after leaving the beaten track. The inequalities of the road were so great, that the horse, although one of the stout active Llanéro breed, found considerable exertion necessary, in scrambling up the small eminences. When descending them, he was compelled to slide down on his haunches, bringing with him loose stones and gravel; so that Maria del Rosario, totally unused as she was to travelling in that manner, was kept in constant terror of falling.

They at length reached a wood of lofty *cäoba* trees, beneath which the wild guava bushes grew so thickly, that the travellers could scarcely keep their seat; even by stooping under the branches, and occasionally deviating from the narrow cattle track, which led to the mountain stream. To add to the novice's terror, the forest, of which this wood formed a part, abounded in *javalies*, or wild hogs; and, as the horse started at the small droves, which repeatedly crossed the path in search of wild fruit, her fancy magnified them into panthers and jaguars. The notes of the nocturnal forest birds, also, terrified her with the harshness of their abrupt, ill-omen'd song. The metallic tones of the *darra*, or bell-bird, rang through the glades at measured intervals, precisely resembling in sound a small convent bell, tolled for midnight devotion; and the *tucúqueri*, or eagle-owl, screamed almost articulately from the branches of the *congrias*.

The sound of a rivulet was now distinctly heard, as they approached the ravine. The horse suddenly stopped short, snorting as he appeared to reconnoitre an abrupt descent through the dark underwood, which Doña Maria apprehended to terminate in some precipice. Being roused by the spur, he plunged forward, and slid down the bank of the quebráda, for so it proved to be, crashing through the brush-wood and matted creeping plants in his descent. Here Don Beltràn dismounted, and lifted his daughter from the pillion; assuring her that she had not far to walk, but that the roughness of the road would render it unsafe to trust any longer to the horse's feet. Maria del Rosario could see that she stood in the gorge of a ravine, through which a considerable torrent foamed in the rainy season; but its place was now merely occupied by a diminutive rivulet, which could scarcely struggle through the rocks and stones, brought down, by the annual rains, from the mountains. Huge forest trees, whose roots were partially undermined by wintry torrents, stretched their massive trunks and spreading branches across the quebràda, almost excluding the light of the moon; while the lofty and hollow banks, which were in total darkness, resembled caverns, from which the trembling novice half expected to see banditti sally, as she gazed on the mis-shapen rocks that lay piled on heaps in the gloom.

After proceeding for a short distance along this toilsome road, in uninterrupted silence, excépt when the horse's iron-shod hoofs rang through the hollow glen, as he stumbled over the smooth round shingles, they reached an abrupt angle in the narrow channel of the torrent, where a fire was blazing briskly under a steep rock, Don Beltràn, who appeared absorbed in thought, had omitted to prepare his daughter to meet any one in this desolate retreat. It was therefore with no small feelings of surprise that she heard him say, as they approached the cavern,—"Joaquin, I see, has been preparing a comfortable spot for our reception. You have but seldom met your brother, Rosaríto! since first you entered the convent. It is time you should become better acquainted; for you are about to undertake a long journey together."

The brother and sister had indeed been brought up so completely apart, (as is not unusual in the country,) that she felt even more embarrassed by this abrupt introduction, than if he had been a perfect stranger. He had never visited the convent during her noviciate, and his time had been passed in a totally different circle from that in which she had moved, during the last month, while under the care of Doña Gertrudes. Joaquin, on the contrary, appeared little affected in any way by the meeting. He offered his sister the seat he had been occupying, on a fragment of rock near the fire, as formally as though she had been a mere acquaintance; and immediately turned away, to examine the provisions which Don Beltràn had brought with him; declaring he had never in his life felt such an appetite. The alforjas were found to contain some slices of tazajo [25] and bread, besides a calabash of that aguardiente, commonly known by the uninviting name of *chiváto,* from the flavour it acquires in the goatskin bottles in which it is kept. Don Beltràn advised his daughter to partake of this homely fare, which was all he had been able to procure at so late an hour; acquainting her at the same time, that he designed to proceed on the journey they had before them, as soon as the horses which had brought them thither should be rested. She declined taking any refreshment; but the father and son, whose appetite had not been impaired by the fatigue and anxiety of the day, commenced an attack (*á porfia* as it were) on the provisions; having occasionally recourse to the calabash, as a valuable auxiliary against the chill night air, which began to be keenly felt.

When they had finished their repast, they again saddled their horses, which had been browsing on the young shoots of the culegüi cane, under the banks of the ravine. Then, bringing forward the iron chest from its place of concealment, they laid it as before on one mule, and fastened the trunks on the other. Don Beltràn seated his daughter once more on the pillion, and mounted before her. Joaquin, looking gloomy and discontented, at the misfortune that had reduced him to the station of a peon, rode forward, leading the two mules, and took the road into the interior of the forest.

CHAPTER IX.

MORNING.—THE INDIAN HUT.—THE CREOLE OF CURAZAO.—THE SCHOONER.

They both embark,—the ship gets under weigh;
The wind was fair, the water passing rough:
A devil of a sea rolls in that bay;
As I, who've crossed it oft, know well enough.
Don Juan.

THE moon rode high in the heavens, when they left the Quebrada del Tucúqueri; and as they proceeded farther into the recesses of the forest, they met with less interruption from the underwood, The caōba[26] trees, also, of which it was chiefly composed, were of a more majestic size, and situated much farther apart from each other, than in the outskirts; for towards these the wood was spreading, and was consequently of a later growth. The mighty monarchs of the forest appeared to disdain all meaner competitors; and the soil in which they grew, exhausted, as it were, by sustaining their gigantic frames, seemed incapable of nourishing a blade of grass, or anything possessing vegetable life, except enormous fungi and dusky lichens;—the reptiles of botany.

The first gray streaks of dawn became visible, as the travellers emerged from the forest, and entered on a series of grassy glades, surrounded by copse-wood, extending between it and the vallies of Leon. Numerous herds of red deer were leaving the thickets, and spreading themselves to graze along the borders of the savanna; while the shrill crow of the *guacharacà*, or cock of the wood, and the piercing scream of the wild turkey, were heard from the pomegranate trees. There was, nevertheless, none of that refreshing coolness, which usually renders the morning hour so delightful, even in the hottest climates. Not a breath of air waved the long savanna grass, nor rustled through the leaves of the moríchi palm; and, as the sun rose higher, its rays were cast with unmitigated splendor on the unsheltered plain, which the travellers were crossing. The oppressive sultriness, such as generally follows, as well as it precedes, an earthquake, determined Don Beltràn to pass a few hours beneath the first shade that should offer itself. The horses and mules gave evident signs of fatigue; and although Maria del Rosario forbore to complain, her father could judge, by her flushed cheek and parched lips, that some refreshment more suited to her habits than that which he had provided for the journey, and a short siesta in the shade, were absolutely necessary for her.

They were coasting along the edge of an extensive tract of sand and gravel,—which had apparently overwhelmed this part of the savanna at some remote period, swept along, probably, by a long forgotten inundation, or suddenly poured forth, from the bowels of the earth, by some devastating earthquake,—when Don Beltràn suddenly broke the melancholy silence that excessive thirst had caused among them.

"Reyna del cielo!" he exclaimed; "there is water at last. Keep up your spirits, Rosarito! a few minutes longer, and we shall assuage this bitter thirst that oppresses us."

The novice looked in the direction her father pointed; and, though her eyes were inflamed and dim, with the scorching heat of the atmosphere, which had deprived both them and her lips of all moisture, she fancied she saw distinctly a clear pool, scarcely agitated by a gentle breeze, that broke into waving lines the shadows of the neighbouring palm trees. She faltered thanks to her patron saint for this unexpected prospect of relief; and would have wept for joy, but that her tears appeared dried in their source. To reach the spot where the lagoon appeared to be situated, they were under the necessity of turning off from the beaten track, into the heavy sand and shingles round which it wound. The horses and mules, instead of pressing forward instinctively, hung back, in spite of spurs and blows; and, at last, stood obstinately and determinedly still.

Joaquin Peñuela, irritated at this delay, and commending the cattle and the tiresome journey he was compelled to take to "cien mil demonios," dismounted, and set off on foot to fill their calabash. His father and sister too much fatigued to follow him, watched him with anxious eyes, as he walked slowly towards the lagoon. He appeared to enter it; but did not stop to draw water. He passed on, and walked completely through that which they still believed to be a clear pool; and yet, to their unspeakable surprise, he did not throw himself down eagerly to drink, as they felt that they must have done in his situation. His father called him impatiently, and he turned: but it was to dash the calabash to the ground, with gestures of fierce disappointment. He caught up handsfull of sand, which he threw violently from him, to show them that he had at length discovered, on seeing the same delusive appearance before, behind, and around him, that the supposed lagoon was the production of that tantalising illusion, the deceitful *mirage* of the desert.

Don Beltràn now comprehended why the beasts were so determined against proceeding in this direction. Their instinct, a more unerring guide than man's boasted reason, had warned them that, by leaving the path, they would wander farther and farther from the usual halting place, where alone water was to be procured.

He accordingly directed Joaquin to turn with the mules towards a *mata* of palms, a few miles off the road; and after a tedious journey over the dusty plain, which appeared to lengthen as they toiled along, they discovered a small Indian hut, built among the trees which they were approaching. By the herd of cows, that were ruminating in the shade, they knew it to be one of the *conúcos* attached to some large dairy farm. Their approach aroused two or three stout bony tiger-dogs, of the

Cumaná breed, from their place of repose beneath the projecting eaves of the cottage. As these guardians of the herd rushed furiously forward, resenting the intrusion of strangers, a little Indian boy, more than half naked, sprang up from a miniature hovel, in which he had been lounging in all the luxury of indolence, together with a whole litter of young brothers and sisters; and hurried to the rescue of the travellers. By means of a small sling, from which he hurled pebbles with true Indian dexterity, he drove the dogs slowly and sulkily back to their lair. From thence they long viewed the strangers askance, couched in the attitude of attack, as that most natural to them, with jealous looks and stifled growls, before they became in some degree reconciled to their unusual appearance.

The mother of the family, who was busied, with her eldest daughter, pressing curds into small round baskets, neatly plaited of palm leaves, came forward on hearing the sound of the horses' hoofs. The usual salutation being exchanged, of "Ave Maria purisima!"—"Sin mancho concebida!"—she welcomed the travellers to her cottage, and invited them to dismount; but previously handed them a capacious calabash of fresh water, which had been hanging in the breeze. She lifted Maria del Rosario from her pillion, kissing her on each cheek, as she led her under the cool roof, which, besides being shaded by the spreading Moríchis under which it was built, was covered with the broad-leaved zapallo and calabaza, with golden and white flowers; these useful vegetables having climbed up the posts of the shed, and spread themselves entirely over the thatch. There were no walls to exclude the breeze from the savanna, except round the small *apozento*, within which a candle was kept constantly burning before a gaudy coloured print of Nuestro Sõra del Carmen, surmounted by a small crucifix of brass. The whole of the partition, around this shrine, was gaily decorated with brilliant feathers, wild birds' eggs, and stuffed humming-birds hung in festoons. This division of the cottage, although bearing the name of a bed-room, had never been profaned by being put to that use; and was neatly enclosed by a lattice work of bright yellow canes. It contained, among the other few valuables of the family, a small carved chest of black mahogany; from which their Indian hostess now hastened to take a neat hammock of grass net, as white as cotton, which she hung up for the accommodation of her fair guest.

Don Beltràn and his son unsaddled their horses and mules, and entrusted them to the care of the two eldest boys, who volunteered to take them to drink at a neighbouring pool. The urchins mounted with the activity of monkeys, on obtaining permission; congratulating themselves on their promotion to the important post of grooms, with a grin of delight, seldom to be seen even among the younger branches of their saturnine race. The travellers then entered the house, and found their hospitable hostess spreading a low table with plantains, cheese, and milk in small white calabashes; lamenting, at the same time, the absence of her husband, who, she said, would have been proud to assist her in showing attention to her guests. When they had concluded their meal, she pointed out to Don Beltràn and Joaquin, two *Campechánas*, or swinging beds, made of undressed skins, cut into a sort of net-work, that were suspended beneath the palms; recommending them to refresh themselves by a siesta. She also produced a curtain of woven grass, which she sprinkled with water, and drew close round the hamáca in which Maria del Rosario was reclining, to screen her from the sand-flies. She then returned to her occupation, which the travellers' arrival had interrupted, under the cool shed she used as a dairy.

Never had the hours of siesta appeared to the novice to pass so rapidly, for never had she felt such need of rest: she was, however, considerably refreshed, when her father again summoned her to resume her journey. Their Indian hostess absolutely refused to accept of any remuneration for her attention, except a few cigars, which Don Beltràn left for her husband, and a scapulary of Santa Clara which the novice hung round her neck at parting. Another tedious tract of savanna land remained to be crossed; and it was not until late in the evening, that they began to ascend the range of low hills, between the level country of Cañaveràl and the sea-coast.

The port which Don Beltràn had selected, as being one at which he ran but little risk of interruption in making his escape, was the small fishing village of Los Bagres. It was built on the side of a narrow creek; and was frequented only by coasting piraguas, and small droguers from the neighbouring islands, which used to touch here occasionally for the purpose of trading or smuggling. Both terms were indeed synonimous on the coast of Tierra Firme, except at the larger ports. Although Peñuela had no reason to apprehend pursuit, considering the state of commotion in which he had left Caraccas, the imminent danger he had already undergone induced him to be as cautious as possible. He therefore left his son and daughter in the first cottage at the entrance of the village; and rode on alone, in search of the captains of some little vessels, whose masts he could see above the huts.

It was not long before he found out the *cancha de bolas*, (which was also the dancing-house and only place of public entertainment in the village,) by the sounds of mirth and revelry that proceeded from it, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour. The cancha itself, with its smooth earthen floor sprinkled with white sand, occupied one end of a large oblong shed, open at the sides, and thatched with leaves. At the farther end of this rancho, was a pulpería, or shop for the sale of sundries;—chiefly aguardiente and tobacco. In the centre, which was by far the largest compartment, was a crowded assembly surrounding a few dancers; who were amusing themselves and the spectators with a fandango, to the music of a harp, two or three vihuelas, and a choir of singers, partly volunteers, partly hired.

Don Beltrân called on one side the pulpéro, who was busily engaged supplying his clamorous guests, in the dancing-shed or the cancha, with calabashes of *punchëi* for the men, and copitas of liqueurs for the females. On enquiring if any merchant sailors were there, he was directed to the pulpería, where he found three foreign masters of droguers, seated apart from the natives, smoking long negro cigars, and rivalling each other in copious libations of aguardiente chiváto. Two were mulattoes from the island of Trinidad, who had crossed the Boca del Sirpiente in their small sloops, and were returning freighted with cane spirits distilled on the Main. These were then in considerable request at the plantations on the neighbouring islands, for the purpose of making up into rum for the European market. The third was a white, or rather tawny, Dutch creole of Curazao, who had just landed and sold a cargo of dry-goods from his free trader, and was in readiness to return.

Lodewyk Sluiker was exactly the schipper suited to Don Beltran's purpose. The phlegm he inherited from his Teutonic ancestors, had moderated in him the alertness and inquisitiveness of the creole, to a good humoured *insouciance*, which rendered him the most accommodating being possible, in the way of business. He was ready to do anything for an employer,—provided it would not give him too much trouble;—and to sail to any part of the West Indies,—where he was in no danger of the custom-house,—without asking inconvenient questions, and "for a consideration." Peñuela therefore easily struck a bargain with him, for a reasonable sum, to convey himself and two other passengers, with their luggage, to the neutral island of St. Thomas; for no offer could induce Lodewyk to hazard his schooner at any port under the Spanish flag. Don Beltràn therefore returned in search of his son and daughter; and Sluiker proceeded to collect his "*zwart schelms*" of negro sailors, who were enjoying themselves, with all the thoughtless hilarity of their nation and profession, at the fandango. Previously to embarking, Peñuela endeavoured to dispose of his horses and mules; but could meet with no purchaser in the fishing village. He therefore gave them to the schipper, who entrusted them to the care of the *pulpéro*; declaring they would make him an excellent venture to Curazao on his return.

Every thing being prepared for hauling out of the creek, the schooner was brought alongside a small jetty, and the passengers embarked by the light of a lantern, which Kapitein Lodewyk held for their accommodation. The honest schipper, notwithstanding his habitual indifference to every thing which did not immediately interfere with his own affairs, was surprised to see so young and lovely a female about to embark in a craft so void of all accommodation as his; especially in company with men, of whom he could entertain no favourable opinion, from the clandestine manner of their leaving the country. However, the doubloons he had received were good; and the lady, whoever she might be, made no complaint. He therefore prudently determined to say nothing on the subject, except to express his fear in his provincial jargon, half Dutch and half Spanish, that the "*po-*

brecita jung-frauw" would be but uncomfortably situated on board the droguer.[27]

His apprehensions, to confess the truth, were not without foundation; for the vessel was one of the long Havannéro schooners, built chiefly for sailing, with but little draught of water, and running away to nothing under the counter. Consequently the cabin, if the little berth abaft the mainmast deserved the name, had barely room for two persons to stretch themselves on the lockers. Lodewyk however insisted, before he would cast loose from the jetty, on accommodating his lady-passenger in the best manner possible. Having wrapped a boat-cloak round her, he seated her on the companion; and jumping down below, handed up a binnacle, a liquor case, and several pea-jackets and foul-weather hats, &c. which lumbered the berth. He then earnestly advised her to go below out of the chill night air; comforting her with an assurance, that as soon as the schooner should be clear of the creek and in the fair-way, he would knock down the bulk-head which separated the cabin from the after-hold. As the latter was empty, she would then have plenty of fresh air, and even room to walk about, if she felt disposed.

He appeared to consider no apologies necessary to Don Beltràn and his son; merely warning them, as he saw this was their first passage, to keep their feet out of coils of rope, and their heads from under the boom, when the main-sail jibed. At the elder Peñuela's request, he lowered the iron chest nto the hold, making no remark on its weight, which was considerable, except desiring the men to stow it right a mid-ships, and close to the heel of the main-mast, for it was enough, he said, to throw the droguer out of trim. He also made room for the trunks, on the cabin floor, under the swinging table.

The tide having begun to ebb, Sluiker sent two hands in the jolly-boat to tow: the lights in the cottages at Los Bagres rapidly receded, and at length totally disappeared. The scene was so perfectly new to the passengers, who had remained on deck, that they exchanged scarcely a word, as they leaned on the companion, gazing at the shores, which were indistinctly seen as the creek widened. Not a sound was heard around, but the slow splash of the oars in the boat ahead; with the occasional "Orrah!" of the negroes pulling, which echoed for a few moments across the surrounding level land, and then died away in the distance. Lodewyk, who stood at the helm, now recommended his passengers to descend into the fore-hold; where, he informed them, they would find a few spare sails, on which they might *rough it* comfortably enough until day. They gladly followed his advice, and soon forgot the novelty of their situation in repose.

CHAPTER X.

LA GUAYRA.—THE REINFORCEMENT.

Come, ev'ry hill plaid,
  And true heart that wears one—
Come ev'ry steel blade,
  And strong hand that bears one—
Come away, come away—
  Haste to the summons!
Come in your war array,
  Gentles and Commons.

SCOTT.

DON CARLOS and his friend Lorenzo Tovàr arrived at La Guayra, soon after the reveilles had ceased beating, on the morning after the earthquake. They found that, although the buildings had shared to the fullest extent in that dreadful visitation, there were, nevertheless, no symptoms of that factious and mutinous tendency in the inhabitants, which threatened the capital with the horrors of civil war, in addition to the fearful misfortune which had already befallen it.

As is generally the case, in sea-port towns on the Spanish Main, there were but few *rotozos*, or idlers of any description, in La Guayra, in comparison to the numbers infesting the inland towns. The majority of the inhabitants, too, being merchants and manufacturers were personally interested in the maintenance of order, and could at any time command a sufficient force, composed of their immediate dependants and peons, to put down any disturbance, which might threaten mischief to their interests and property. Besides, the garrison was necessarily stronger than that maintained at Caraccas, La Guayra being one of the principal ports in Venezuela; while, on the contrary, the friars were few in number, and by no means an influential class among a population, whose habits were decidedly those of military and seafaring men.

The governor, Don Ygnacio Cordovèz, his house in the Recòva having been destroyed, was lodged under a marquee in the arsenal. He was an active bustling little creole, who had risen by means of the revolution from the desk of an escriváno, to the dignity of brigadier and military commandant of the port. Conscious of his original insignificance and unimposing stature, (for he was far below the middle size), he made it his study to conceal these defects, by an affectation of busy importance, and by assuming the airs of a martinet.

The young men found him, notwithstanding the early hour at which they arrived, in full uniform, booted and spurred. He was busily engaged superintending the drill of several awkward squads, which had been assembled for that purpose in the arsenal, that they might be more immediately under his own inspection. Most of the drill-serjeants were Spaniards, prisoners of war, who had volunteered into the patriot service, to avoid the casasmatas and public works. These men might readily be recognised as veterans, by their scarred and weather-beaten features, as well as the rigid perpendicularity of their figures, and their stern, sonorous enunciation when giving the words of command. Nevertheless, the governor took repeated opportunities of disapproving their mode of drill, and correcting the faulty positions prescribed by the old school of tactics, after which they were modelling the recruits. This species of interference was very little to their satisfaction or edification, it might be presumed, by the ill-dissembled scorn and contempt which they evidently felt for their officious creole instructor.

Don Ygnacio Cordovès desisted from this his favorite occupation, on seeing an aide-de-camp of General Miranda approach him. Returning Sepúlveda's salute, with much courteous dignity, he begged to know with what instructions his respected "Amigo ý camaráda" had been pleased to favour him. On being fully acquainted with the unpleasant state of affairs at Caraccas, he broke out into bitter invectives against the whole fraternity of *monigótes,* whom he characterised as dangerous enemies to tranquillity, and drones of the commonwealth.

"It is fortunate for Venezuela, Señor Edecan!" said he, "that I have uniformly exerted myself to maintain discipline in this garrison. Had it been otherwise, the state of the republic would have been indeed critical. I sincerely hope Miranda will at length take warning, and attend to the advice I have so often had the honour to give him, to banish every *cogóte-raspádo* from the country.

Ayudante Nuñes! let the garrison immediately get under arms. I myself will select a reinforcement for the capital."

While the fort-adjutant was executing his order, the governor invited Don Carlos to his quarters, to refresh himself after his journey; directing Tovàr at the same time to join his regiment, which, he observed, was one of those he designed to detach. Notwithstanding the foppery of the little brigadier, he was a rigid disciplinarian; and before he and his guest had finished their early meal of fish and coffee, to which both brought soldiers' appetites, the adjutant reported the troops in readiness.

Sepúlveda now learned, on enquiry, that in consequence of there having been no ceremonial of the anniversary the preceding day, the garrison of La Guayra had left the churches previously to the earthquake; consequently very few were killed; and those chiefly by the fall of barracks and hospitals. He was provided with a fresh horse, from the governor's own stables; and accompanied him to the Plaza, which was surrounded by regiments in open column, and marching order. Having wheeled them into line, Don Ygnacio addressed them in a high-flown speech, as was his constant custom, touching their duty as soldiers and patriots; and concluded, by acquainting them with his intention of detaching half the garrison, to the assistance of their comrades at Caraccas, who were in danger of being overpowered by the intrigues of the friars.

Nothing could be more agreeable to the troops, than this declaration. They saw a prospect of exchanging the tedious uniformity of garrison duty, for the excitement and variety to be found in a campaign. As a very strong prejudice against the friars existed among the military, whom they had taken every opportunity of vilifying and reviling in their sermons, the troops entertained hopes of having it in their power to " feed fat the grudge they bore them." It was therefore with exultation that the Granadéros de Barlovento and the Cazadóres de Aragoa, heard themselves appointed as part of the reinforcement ; and their fellow soldiers secretly envied them, as they marched past to the savanna outside the city, where three corps of cavalry were formed in readiness to accompany them. The governor ordered each horseman to take a foot-soldier *en encas ;* and having given the senior colonel his directions, wished the detachment success, and returned into La Guayra.

The soldiers had little or no baggage to encumber them ; and the stout active creole horses, little regarding the extra weight they carried, set off at a brisk trot, which effectually suppressed for a time the inclination which the troops felt, of audibly expressing their joy. But, when they had crossed the level country, and reached the short steep hills of the Cerranía, where they were occasionally obliged to dismount, they gave full vent to their glee in national songs, which, as was customary on a march, they sang in alternate chorus, each regiment in turn taking up the wild melody. After a few hours halt on the borders of a wood, situated about half way between La Guayra and the capital, they proceeded with renewed spirits and animation. Towards evening, they reached the heights of El

Texar; from whence they could see the groves and plantations round Caraccas, and the few remaining spires and turrets of that once splendid city, gilded by the last rays of the setting sun.

From hence Sepúlveda, who had hitherto ridden beside Lorenzo Tovàr, spurred forward to apprize his general that the reinforcement was approaching. He learned that the scanty remains of the garrison had been attacked, the night before, in their bivouac on the Egído, by the infuriated zealots of the city, whom the friars had stimulated to insurrection. These had been joined by the rotozos, who fought solely for plunder; and by the numerous royalist citizens, who had long been desirous of a similar opportunity of reinstating the Spanish Government. The patriots had lost their field-pieces, on which the mob had thrown themselves in all the irregular and irresistible fury of fanaticism; and Miranda had found himself compelled to retire, with his diminished army, to his own Quinta of Girasòl, situated about a league from Caraccas, on a gentle ascent towards the hills overlooking the city.

As it was late when Sepúlveda arrived, he was detained by a picket of cavalry, stationed at the bottom of the avenue leading to the house, until he was recognized by the commanding officer. As he proceeded in quest of Miranda, he passed through the well known pleasure-grounds, so strangely altered from their former rural appearance, in the few hours during which they had been occupied by troops, that he could scarcely believe them to be the same. The rose-bushes and pomegranates had been cut down and cleared away, in many parts, to make room for the infantry to pile their arms; and the neat white paling, which formerly encircled the lawn, had been broken up for fuel, and lay in heaps near the numerous fires that blazed in every part of the shrubbery. The ornamental summer-houses were converted into officers' quarters; and had by that means escaped the general havoc. But the very state of preservation, in which they remained, formed a sad contrast to the surrounding scene; and forcibly recalled the idea of former happy meetings held on the same spot, when no sounds intruded but those of the guitar, and the still sweeter voices of the lively Carracqueñas. The lawn too, in front of the house, so often lightly pressed by the feet of merry dancers, was trampled by the carbineers' horses picketted in rows, and was littered with heaps of sugar-cane and maiz-leaves, which the foragers had brought in from the neighbouring plantations.

The Quinta, which was spacious, and built after what is usually styled in South America the Italian fashion, was of one story high, and had consequently received but little damage from the earthquake. The wide corridors, running round the house, were occupied by the staff officers, and principal citizens who had accompanied Miranda. The interior was entirely appropriated to the accommodation of the ladies belonging to patriot families, who had been compelled by the disturbances to fly from the city, and take refuge in the camp. Miranda had been that day invested with the authority, though not the title, of Dictator, by the unanimous voice of the Junta Gobernatíva. He had, notwithstanding, called a council, composed of all his fellow-citizens of talent and experience who were present, to consult them on the line of conduct to be pursued under the present emergency. The arrival of Sepúlveda relieved them from a principal part of their anxiety; for they had been exceedingly apprehensive of a similar popular movement at La Guayra, which would have at once introduced Monteverde and the Spanish army into the heart of Venezuela. They were therefore rejoiced to hear, that every thing was tranquil at the port; and Miranda, ordering another of his aides-de-camp to meet the approaching reinforcement, and direct it where to encamp, dismissed Don Carlos, to take the repose of which he concluded he must stand in need.

Among the attendants of the staff, Sepúlveda saw his own servant Gaspar, who was loquacious in his expressions of joy, at once more seeing his master; and informed him, that his uncle the chaplain was at the other end of the corridor. Don Carlos found him comfortably seated on his *petácas*,[28] which he had taken the precaution to bring with him from the city. He was surrounded by a party of young officers, whom he had invited to partake of a plentiful supper, provided him by the foragers; for the creole soldiers uniformly esteemed and respected the secular clergy, as much as they detested and despised the friars. Two of the cavalry picket, stationed at the Quinta, had volunteered their services as cooks and waiters. They were standing in the middle of the supper circle, with carbines slung and sabres by their sides, holding the wooden spits on which they had roasted the abundant contribution made for their chaplain, consisting of several different sorts of fowls, and entire joints of kid. Don Gabriáno himself was doing ample justice to the good fare. Animated, rather than depressed, by the novelty of the scene, he was chatting and laughing, as merrily as if he had been seated at the head of his own table, at his peaceful curáto of Maracay.

On seeing Sepúlveda approach, all made room for him with kind greetings. His uncle started up, and embraced him affectionately; insisting on his sitting down and joining them, before he would allow him either to make any enquiries, or to relate any news. When supper was over, and the guests had dispersed to enjoy their cigars, and to rest from the toils of the day, Don Carlos anxiously enquired after his mother. His uncle assured him that she was safe, and comfortably situated in the Quinta; but that she had been so much harrassed and fatigued of late, that it would not be advisable to disturb her before next morning. While Sepúlveda was hesitating, and unable to pronounce the name of her who was ever present to his thoughts, Don Gabriano continued,—" In addition to the recent serious alarms my sister has experienced, both from the earthquake and the insurrection in the city, she feels most keenly the sudden separation from her protegée Maria Del Rosario. Don Beltràn, her father, has escaped from prison in the confusion, and has fled from the fate he richly merited, heaven knows whither, taking his daughter with him. It is a thousand pities the poor girl had not already taken the veil. She would, in that case, have been out of his power; and what can she expect but wretchedness from accompanying an outlawed, self-banished, traitor?"

Don Gabriano continued his relation of events which had occurred; but his nephew heard no more. "That *banished*, that one word *banished*," sounded like the knell of his long-cherished hopes. Ever since he had last seen Maria del Rosario, he had dwelt with delight on every circumstance of his snatching her from such imminent peril, at the chapel of the Monjas Claras;—at so critical a moment too, when she was on the point of pronouncing the irrevocable words, that were to divorce her for ever from the world;—and had suffered himself to believe, that he who had been permitted thus to save her life at the risk of his own, was also destined to protect, and render happy, the life so miraculously preserved. His first thought was, how she might be traced; but he recollected his duty, and the perilous state of affairs, in which his country claimed his best exertions. He therefore compelled himself to attend to the worthy chaplain, who, encompassed in a thick cloud of smoke, from his only luxury, a *cigarro puro*, and deeply interested in the occurrences he was relating, had failed to observe the complete abstraction of his nephew. Don Gabriáno continued to descant on the wiliness and treachery of those "*lobos empellejádos*," the friars; and the danger to be apprehended from Monteverde, should he receive intelligence of the state of the capital, which the chaplain likened to a house divided against a house.

"Far be it from me," said he, "to think evil of any community; but these monigótes, Carlos! are notoriously dangerous to the well-being, nay to the existence, of a free republic. Their ignorance and superstition stand in need of the support of some paramount authority; without which, the fraternity are conscious that they must everywhere sink into disrepute and decay. At the same time, the slavish principles of passive obedience, which they have imbibed in their cloisters, render them apt and willing agents to restore, by every species of intrigue, a tyrannical government, such as we have just succeeded in shaking off. Our situation, however, has at length come to a crisis; and Miranda has declared his resolution of banishing from Venezuela these demagogues, as soon as he has assembled sufficient force to attack the mutineers. Troops have already arrived from Valencia and Vitória; and Zaraza has sent an express to announce his approach with a strong guerilla. I therefore suppose the attack will be made on Caraccas to-morrow."

"The sooner the better, tio mio! We have long been inactive; and I desire nothing better than a charge on the Godo canalla, backed by those treacherous friars, who have chosen the hour of Venezuela's greatest distress for their revolt. But surely Miranda overrates their force; or he is far more cautious than usual. For my own part, I should say there are enough men bivouacked on the Quinta,—without reckoning the reinforcement from La Guayra,—to chastise the insurgents."

"You speak like a hot-headed youth, Carlos! The rotozos alone are at least four thousand strong.

Add to these the discontented citizens, and concealed Godos, besides the Capuchins, Mercedarios, and Agustinos Descalzos ;—I understand the prudent Dominicans stand neutral, as usual ;—and you will find that a swarm of wasps has mustered in the city, far more numerous than your wisdom calculates on. They are all armed, from the deserted barracks and arsenal ; besides possessing the field-pieces they took from us last night. Our reconnoitring parties report, that the principal avenues to the the city have been strongly barricaded, for which purpose there are indeed ample materials ; so that, come when it may, the struggle will doubtless be sanguinary. *Dios sobre todo!* Meanwhile, Hijo Carlos! I will detain you no longer from your rest ; for we shall both be roused pretty early in the morning, sin duda, with drum and bugle. Adios hijito!"

Sepúlveda took leave of his uncle, and retired to a corner of the corridor, where his servant had prepared him a soldier's couch of straw. He threw himself on it, wrapped in his capote ; and his melancholy thoughts long kept him waking : but sheer fatigue, that never-failing opiate, at length lulled him to sleep.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BIVOUAC.—THE GUERILLA CHIEFS.—THE INSURGENTS.

Oh! the sight entrancing,
When morning's beam is glancing
O'er files arrayed in helm and blade,
And plumes in the gay wind dancing!
When hearts are all high beating,
And the trumpet's voice repeating
That song whose breath may lead to death,—
But never to retreating.

Moore.

The Quinta of Girasòl, at which were the temporary head-quarters of the patriot army, had always been the favourite resort of innumerable singing-birds. They used to find shelter from the sultry heat of noon, so oppressively felt on the plain of Caraccas, in these groves surrounding the spacious pleasure-grounds; and coolness in the rivulet, which murmured through them from the hill above. They were now driven from their accustomed haunts, by the unusual confusion and clamour of troops; and none had dared to welcome the dawn with their cheerful song. In their stead, the trumpets of the carbineer guard, echoing through the corridors, broke the calm silence of morning with their animating revelliez; and were answered, by the bugles of the infantry, from the opposite shrubbery. The busy hum of the armed multitude was next heard, as the troops sprang from their rude couch, and formed in lines along the "pleached allies," and among the clumps of rare flowering shrubs, which ornamented the Quinta.

Miranda mounted his horse and rode out, attended by his aides-de-camp, to visit the neighbouring reinforcements, and to superintend in person the necessary arrangements for the attack, which he designed to make that day. While returning from this tour of inspection, he was met by the veteran General Zaraza, accompanied by three or four subordinate leaders of guerillas. These chiefs, as well as their venerable looking general, were dressed in the usual costume of the vallies; loose cotton shirts and drawers, dark coloured ponchos wrapped about the middle, broad palm-leaf hats with gaudy plumes of feathers, sandals of raw hide, and heavy silver spurs. Their weapons were carbines and pistols,—silver-mounted and plain,—of various patterns, and evidently the *spolia opima* of hard fought skirmishes; with old-fashioned Spanish dragoon pouches, buckled tight round their waists. Each carried a *machete*, or short cut-and-thrust sword, in an embroidered belt, slung over the neck and under the left arm. They wore their hair cropped so close on the crown of their heads, that it appeared to have been lately shaved; from which fashion the patriots derived the nick-name of *Chocutos*, by which they were usually designated in the royalist camp; but it floated loosely over their foreheads in long curls, which were drawn back on each side from the temples, and twisted behind the ears. A large queue, or rather club, of long straight hair, profusely anointed with *manteca de cacäo*, and plaited with the greatest neatness and attention, hung down over their shoulders. Their horses had as wild an appearance as themselves; not a hair of their flowing tails or manes having been thinned, since they were first caught in the savanna. But their clean fetlocks, and slender well-formed limbs, showed no symptoms of the clumsiness which might have been expected, on a first view of their untrimmed condition.

On seeing the commander-in-chief, they spurred forward to meet him with a shout of welcome; and reining up their mettled chargers close to him, with a sudden violence that almost threw them backwards on their haunches, they embraced him by turns. They then drew back among the aides-de-camp, who were following, highly entertained at the unceremonious manners of their new associates, and saluted them after the same fashion. Zaraza, who was in some degree more polished, merely raised his sombréro to Miranda; and, as the morning breeze waved his thin grey locks, the old warrior addressed his brother general, with all the animation and hilarity of youth.

" A fine morning this, camarada Miranda! for opening a campaign. I am here, you see, punctual to the very hour I promised to join you; but, viva Dios! I have had smart work to collect my guerilléros. My foot has scarcely been out of the stirrup since we parted; except while changing horses. All my people were scattered among their farms, at the maiz harvest; and I had to ride as complete a *rodéo*, as ever I did on my estate, when driving in young cattle to be branded."

"Enhorabuena, amigo Zaraza! you have indeed exerted yourself with your usual spirit. How many, rank and file, have you brought me from the vallies?"

"As near as I can guess, camaráda!—for you know we Guerilléros keep no muster-rolls like regular troops—my own mozos from the neighbourhood of Barcelona are about six hundred. Riquelmen, Gutierrez, and Rivas, bring from four to five hundred each; and my compadre Zedeño's corps, which was cut up so severely near Barquiziméto last year, hardly two hundred. Truly, *entre galgos ý mastínes*, there may be above two thousand."

"Cherípa! compañero; and now the question is how to victual them; for we have as yet no commissariat."

"No le hace, amigo! We passed a farm, belonging to the frayles Capuchínos, on our way; and we took care to supply ourselves with beef enough for to-day. To-morrow we shall have settled the whole affair with the *cogote-raspádos;* and my mozos will separate, every man to his home."

By this time they had reached the Quinta, where Miranda found the troops still under arms, and waiting for his orders. He directed them to leave their ranks, and prepare their morning meal; but to be in readiness to fall in at a moment's warning. While the general was busied in receiving reports, and issuing orders for the day, Sepúlveda took the opportunity of enquiring for his mother. He found her in one of the long virandas overlooking the pleasure-grounds, in conversation with her brother Gabriáno, who was excepted, as chaplain, from the strict order issued, prohibiting the officers from intruding on that part of the Quinta occupied by the ladies. The balconies were filled with Caracqueñas, who looked with interest on the busy scene around them, and chatted merrily with their brothers and cortéjos beneath; finding a great source of diversion in the temporary separation to which they were subjected, and the novel bustle and parade of a camp.

The Godo party, meanwhile, which had possession of the city, had taken every possible precaution to ensure the success of the counter revolution they had commenced. They had already dispatched messengers to Cartagéna, to solicit assistance from Montaverde; who, as they well knew, had lately received a strong reinforcement from Cadiz. In full confidence of being speedily succoured, they resolved to make a vigorous resistance against all attempts to dislodge them. The seditious friars laboured incessantly to keep the enthusiasm of their partizans at its proper pitch, by inflammatory harangues; and the wealthy royalists, many of whom had flocked to the Spanish standard, which was ostentatiously displayed from the ruins of the capital, were lavish in their distribution of money among the populace.

Every man who lives in a revolutionary period, either has been, is, or hourly expects to be, a soldier. Consequently there was but little difficulty in hastily disciplining the insurgents, few of whom were totally unacquainted with the use of arms, so as to render their services as a body available. Several hundred Europeans were scattered among them, who had formerly belonged to the Spanish armies. They had been permitted, by the mistaken lenity of the patriot government, to settle in Caraccas, and even, in many instances, to hold confidential situations, after having surrendered under capitulation in different parts of the country. These men's military skill and experience in warfare, joined to the national antipathy they, as Europeans, bore the creoles, and the personal feelings of rancorous hatred, which, as conquered royalists, they entertained towards the patriots who had humbled them, eminently qualified them to serve as officers among the motley assemblage, which they encouraged by their presence, and animated by their example.

The friars had also sent emissaries among the neighbouring plantations, for the purpose of stimulating the slaves to a revolt against their masters. This unprincipled measure, which was subsequently productive of the most horrible results, was but partially successful at this early stage of the war; for the slaves on the Main, whose treatment was, by many degrees, milder than that experienced by the same class on the islands, for the most part resisted all attempts to corrupt their fidelity. Nevertheless, a considerable body was collected, among the most worthless and depraved of this degraded race; and was armed with lances, machetes, and long knives, as there was no leisure to drill them to the use of fire-arms.

Although the commanders of the insurgents had ventured to lead out their forces on one occasion, in which they had surprised the patriot troops, they had even then met with so warm a reception, that, although finally successful through overpowering numbers, they were deterred from again trying their strength, in the open field, against their disciplined opponents. They were contented to entrench themselves in the Plaza and the neighbouring ruined convents, in a manner which the friars pronounced impregnable. But the veteran Spaniards shook their heads; and doubted whether the raw recruits, whom they saw around them, would be able to make good such breast-works, when vigorously attacked by regular troops.

The command of the whole had been entrusted, by unanimous consent, to Fray Pablo Oyarzùn, a Capuchin, well known throughout Caraccas as a factious demagogue. His Herculean limbs would have better become the cuirass and helmet of a dragoon, than the coarse grey tunic and cerquillo of a friar; and his strength of lungs, and vehemence of declamation, had rendered him popular as an orator at seditious assemblies. This sturdy member of the church-militant had not entirely discarded his monastic habits, in assuming the office and authority of general; for he still wore the white sandals and dark-hooded frock of a Capuchin. But the latter article of dress had been repeatedly rent, by climbing among the ruins of the city, and by his strenuous exertions while assisting to build the barricades; so that it barely reached down to the knee. Instead of the usual knotted girdle of his order, his tunic was bound round his waist by a broad buff-leather belt, which held a horseman's sabre, and a brace of brass-mounted pistols. His shaven crown was covered by a helmet, stripped from one of the patriot carbineers, who had been killed in the Plaza by the mob, during the first effervescence of the popular commotion. The bushy red beard, which he wore in compliance with the rules of his order, gained him, among the insurgents, the appellation of "*el Padre Bastidòr*," from the resemblance it gave him to a Spanish pioneer.

Powerful as his influence was among those of his party, and little as he scrupled to enforce his authority by the most approved method of "*pan ý palo*," he could not succeed in keeping the rotozos, on whose exertions the cause mainly depended, in such order as was desirable. The number of private houses, with well-stocked cellars, as well as of public bodegôns, which had been abandoned, and to which they had unrestrained access, had given them such favorable opportunities for intoxication, as they could not resist. Patroles of their more sober companions in arms were incessantly employed collecting them from the chicherias and wine-houses, in which they indulged in their Bacchanalian propensities; totally forgetful of the attack there was every reason to expect, so soon as Miranda should have mustered a sufficient force.

The alteration in the clothing of the rotozos was another cause of no small embarrassment to their commandant and his subalterns; for the appearance, at a distance, of an irregular group of them, dressed in their borrowed plumes, frequently alarmed the pickets in the Plaza, with the idea that a party of the enemy had entered the city. Some few were contented with wearing the cavalry and infantry uniforms, which they found in barracks or government stores, and on the bodies of soldiers who had been crushed to death during the earthquake. By far the greater number, however, dressed themselves in the gaudiest suits they could plunder, in the houses belonging to members of the Cabildo, and in the wardrobe of the theatre. Even the gaily embroidered and spangled dresses of the bull-fighters had been put in requisition, from the *cancha de toros.* As these realized the *beau ideal* of splendid apparel, in the eyes of the mob, they became the cause of many single combats with the knife; and repeatedly changed owners in the course of the day. This prevailing passion for gaudy decorations was confined to adorning their persons from the waist upwards. They preferred the *guayúco* and loose calzoncillos, far beyond trowsers or pantaloons; and the few among them, who were tempted to wear shoes or boots, soon laid them aside, in despair at the cramping and chafing occasioned by such unnatural incumbrances.

If their appearance was grotesque, their deportment on parade, when they could be persuaded tc attend, was such as deeply mortified and scandalized their more saturnine instructors. It was not that they were stupid soldiers; for they caught the manual and platoon exercise, from their drill-sergeants, with apparently intuitive readiness of apprehension; and kept step as correctly as might have been anticipated, from their national fondness for music and dancing. But their utter aversion to remaining steady in one position, and their propensity to whistle, and even to sing "*La Cachupina*" and "*El Fraylejòn*," while standing in the ranks, perpetually annoyed and insulted their Spanish leaders, both priests and laymen. Nevertheless, as their co-operation was of great importance, until the expected reinforcement should arrive from Cartagéna, it was considered expedient to connive at these irregularities, and to keep the rotozos in good humour. Such was the condition of the insurgents within the city, whom Miranda was preparing to attack.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ASSAULT.—THE CHINGANERA.

The rampart is won, and the spoil begun,
And all but the after carnage done.
Hark to the haste of flying feet,
That splash in the blood of the slippery street;
But here and there, where 'vantage ground
Against the foe may still be found,
Desperate groups, of twelve or ten,
Make a pause, and turn again.—
Siege of Corinth.

THE hour appointed for the assault at length arrived; and the patriot army moved forward, in silence and by devious routes, from all the points in which it had been encamped; so as to enter Caraccas by different parts of the environs. The forces within the city, being chiefly raw recruits, headed by inexperienced officers, had given themselves up to their customary indulgence of the siesta, as Miranda had foreseen. Repose, at that hour, was considered by them such a matter of course, that they never dreamed of the possibility of its being interrupted in a hostile manner. They had reckoned no less securely on the siesta being held sacred, than both contending parties used to calculate, at the commencement of the revolutionary war, on every sabbath and saint's-day being observed, as temporary cessations of arms.

The Cazadóres de Aragoa, who attacked by the street leading from the plain of the Egído, in conjunction with the Grenadéros del Barlovento, surprised the first picket they came to; the sentry, who was seated with his musket between his knees, dosing under the shade of a projecting roof, being disarmed before he could spread the alarm. Having secured the prisoners in their own guard-room, the troops proceeded unchallenged along the Calle del Marquèz, through solitary streets. They might have supposed the city to be altogether deserted, were it not for the sounds of merriment and singing they occasionally heard, while passing the door of some chichería, within which a party of rotózos was carousing. As they entered the main street leading to the Plaza, a single shot was heard in an opposite quarter. The leading files halted for a moment, and held their breath to listen. It was followed by a heavy, but irregular, discharge of musketry, such as an undisciplined body of men would fire on a sudden alarm; and instantly after, close vollies, as of platoons, pealed in measured time from the same direction.

" Viva la Patria!" exclaimed Lorenzo Tovàr, who commanded the advanced guard. " Our comrades are hard at it already. *Báxen armas! Paso de tróte!*"

The whole column immediately trailed arms, and advanced at a rapid pace, along the wide Calle Real.

The sound of firing was now heard in two different quarters; and the "Vivas" of the assailants were mingled with the cries of the alarmed insurgents. At the same time, the great bell of the Franciscan convent, near the Plaza, which was one of the few large edifices that had escaped with little injury, was tolled in the abrupt startling peal commonly called "*Plagária*."[29] The Cazadores were within a hundred yards of the breast-work raised across the corner of the square, when a flash issued from the muzzle of the field-piece, which was planted in the centre of the barricade, and the report shook the tottering walls on each side of the street. Fortunately for the assailants, the gun had been elevated above point-blank; and the shower of grape hissed harmlessly over their heads, instead of sweeping the foremost files before it, as the insurgents had designed.

When the smoke cleared away, Tovàr found himself close to a small party of Spaniards, who were actively loading the gun for a second shot. He cut down the man who was ramming home the cartridge; and his followers, scrambling over the breast-work, bayonetted those who were defending it. They were soon checked, however, by an unexpectedly heavy and well-directed fire, from a strong body of rotozos, stationed in the rear of the barricade; and they suffered severely, whilst their comrades were swarming up to their support. The smoke of this volley shrouded them for a while; and enabled them to form with little farther loss, except such as was sustained by chance shots. The moment it cleared away, the Casadores rushed forward with the bayonet, supported by the grenadiers, who had reached the scene of action by a parallel street, and had entered the Plaza at the same moment, over the adjoining breast work.

The rotózos withstood the charge for a moment ;—wavered ;—and broke their ranks ; crowding confusedly into the ruined cathedral, where they once more made a desperate stand behind the fallen pillars of the aisles. They were closely pursued by the Cazadores ; and the sacred walls re-echoed the pealing vollies of musketry, the shouts of the combatants, and the shrieks of the wounded. The Spaniards, who had headed the insurgents, alone stood firm. When forced from the spot they had defended, by the press of assailants, who were too eager in pursuit of the fugitives to observe them, they rallied round the fountain in the centre of the square, from whence tkey kept up a destructive and unobserved fire.

The runaway slaves, on whom little dependence had been placed, and who had not been entrusted with fire-arms, were stationed in the courts of the palace and prison, from whence they at first looked on, with their usual apathy, at the destruction that raged before their eyes. The patriots were pouring in at every corner of the Plaza, and the insurgents were flying in confusion through the ruined buildings, and endeavouring to gain the neighbouring churches and convents. Fray Pablo Oyarzùn, who had proved himself in the late *melée* as able a swordsman as an orator, threw himself into the midst of the slaves, and called to them to follow him ; reminding them of the consequences of falling into the power of their enraged masters. This appeal effectually aroused them. Having wrapped their ponchos round their left arms, they drew their long knives, and rushed headlong into the thick of the fight, with a yell of "*Al cuchíllo, Pardos!*" grappling their antagonists with the ferocity of panthers, and inflicting the most desperate wounds, before the troops were aware of their sudden attack.

The rotózos in the cathedral, who fought with renewed confidence from their sheltered position, had succeeded in repulsing the Cazadores. Being supported by the handful of Spaniards, who had collected on the steps of the fountain, they pressed forward on the patriots, with a despairing effort, that bid fair to turn the fortune of the day. At that moment, loud shouts of "*Alza Zaráza!*" were heard; and the aged chief, mounted on a spirited charger, cleared the barricade beside the corner of the palace at a single bound, and galloped into the Plaza at the head of his guerilla. One charge decided the day; for the rotózos instantly threw away their arms, and dispersed. As for the revolted slaves, although they fought to the last, and, even when trampled beneath the horses' hoofs, stabbed at them with their long cuchíllos, they were hemmed in, and fell, one by one, with all their characteristic and ferocious stubbornness.

The patriot troops, maddened by the excitement of the protracted conflict, pursued the fugitives from street to street, and from ruin to ruin, until they reached the Alaméda; where the carbineers, and the reinforcement of cavalry from La Guayra, arrested their flight, and completed the havoc of the day. Quarter was neither sued for nor offered; and the slaughter was followed up as unrelentingly, as is usual during civil war. It was remarked by the soldiers, that not a single friar had fallen in the Plaza. When first the firing became general, they had fled through the cloisters of the cathedral to their convents, and had concealed themselves, every man in his cell, from the vengeance of the enraged patriots. Miranda, who entered the square towards the close of the engagement, and observed the exertions of Fray Pablo, whose helmet had been struck off in the conflict, leaving his shaven crown exposed, gave repeated orders to have him taken alive. Nevertheless, he eluded all the soldiers' efforts, exhibiting such prowess, that few dared cope with him single-handed; and when he saw the guerilla arrive, he cut his way to the gate of the cathedral, where his pursuers lost all traces of him.

The bugles now sounded the llamáda, to recall the scattered troops to their respective corps; and, by Miranda's orders, the army was marched to the upper end of the Alaméda, where it bivouacked. As there was no farther duty for him to perform that night, Sepúlveda left the party of staff-officers, who were eagerly discussing the events of the day, and strolled slowly down the broad walk. The tall dark poplars still overshadowed the path, uninjured by the concussion which had laid towers and palaces low; and appeared silently to assert the superiority of the works of nature over those of art.

With the feeling of melancholy pleasure, which usually attends us when revisiting the scenes endeared to us by recollections of former happiness, Sepúlveda seated himself on the same rude stone bench, which his mother and the novice had occupied but three nights before. He would have given worlds to recall that evening; and, as he thought of the Indian minstrel's song, he unconsciously repeated in a low voice the *refran*—

"No me olvides nunca! No me olvides, no!"

Scarcely had he uttered these words, when he started, at hearing a guitar close behind him, repeating the notes of the air, in the same plaintive cadence in which he had so lately heard it played. He turned hastily, and saw the Chinganéra who had so particularly addressed herself to him the other evening. She was now clad in the coarse dark poncho, and blue *justan*, of her tribe, without a trace of the theatrical dress, which she had adopted when he last saw her. Nothing was more common than to see those of her wandering race, at all times, and in all places; and they were well known to affect a mysterious interest in the affairs of any, whom they believed to be kindly disposed towards them; availing themselves of intelligence obtained by their restless curiosity, either for the purpose of fortune-telling, or to show their capricious gratitude. Yet her sudden appearance on this spot seemed so closely connected with the subject of his previous thoughts, that Sepúlveda waited for some moments, half expecting to hear from her some interesting communication. But, as she stood perfectly still and silent, he addressed a few words to her, in commendation of the prescience she had displayed, in warning his companion of the approaching earthquake.

"Such warnings are easily given, hermáno!" said she; "there is not a child in my tribe, but knows what calm sultry weather, and a sudden failing of the water springs, portend. But no one will place confidence in an Indian's word. The wisest of you all, when assailed by calentura, or wounded by the rattle-snake's fangs, have recourse to us without hesitation. But, as the earthquake rolls by and is no longer remembered, so the fever is cured, the poison is extracted, and the Indian is forgotten. Yet it is not in these alone that we have skill. Will you have a proof, Carlos Sepúlveda? I know *her*, on whom you were this moment thinking; and can tell whither she is gone."

"With my name, at least, you appear well acquainted. But if you have learned any thing of Doña—that is to say, of any one for whom you suppose me to be interested, tell me at once all you know."

"*Suppose!* I *know* it well, hermáno! Did I not watch your looks that evening, as you leaned against yonder alamo? And again, when I sang the *dispedída*,—could I miss seeing to whom you applied each word? Nay, more;—you saw not me in the chapel of the Monjas Claras, although I knelt beside the same pillar: but I saw you, when you burst through the lattice, and bore away the novice in safety. I escaped death, by following your steps; and I never lost sight of her, as long as her foot was on her native soil."

" Heavens! has she then left Venezuela? Where did you last see her? and with whom?"

" Her father took her from your mother's care. I followed them to the Quebráda del Tucúqueri, where her brother,—as I judged from the resemblance he bore to her,—was in waiting with horses and mules. From thence I traced them to the *conúco* of the Indian Jose Chanapas. While they slept the siesta, I crossed the savanna of Cañaveràl, in the direction I observed they were taking. I reached the fishing village of Los Bagres before they entered it; and overheard an agreement made by the father with a foreign sailor, to convey them in his bark to Santo Tomàs. But whether they are gone to the town of that name on the broad Orinoco, or to an island beyond sea which they talk of on the coast, I could not then learn. Be it which it may, I shall know before we meet again; for nothing can long remain a secret to our wandering race."

" Tell me at least, Chinganéra! before you go, whence it is that you take such an interest in me, and in—"

" And in Maria del Rosario Peñuela, you would say. I know it appears incredible to white men, that Indians should remember benefits; and yet they wonder not at gratitude in their dogs. Your alms of the other night were not the first, by many, that I had received from you; and when your mother saw me resting under the trees in her garden, the evening of the earthquake, she did not order me to be turned out, as others would have done, but sent me food. That was a sufficient motive for me to serve her and hers. As for the journey to Los Bagres,—I must have wandered somewhere, for my home is not in cities, but in change of place; so that it mattered little to me which way I turned. And now hermàno, farewell! When I next seek you, it shall be to warn you, that you are about to become a wanderer, as I am. Last night the moon darkened a bright star in her path. When was that seen, and a revolution in Coquibacóa failed to follow?"[30]

As she spoke the last words, she turned from her attentive auditor, and disappeared among the neighbouring gardens.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DROGUER.—THE PIRATE.

A rover on Bahàma banks
To his mates said ;—
" Show the skull and crossed bones
" At the mast-head !
" Our black flag rules shoal water,
" And ev'ry narrow sea ;
" The droguers and the pilot-boats
" Alone may pass it free."
West Indian Song.

Don Beltran and Joaquin Peñuela had been so soundly lulled to rest, after the fatigue of the preceding day, by the gentle motion of the schooner, while crossing the straits of Cubagua, that they did not awake until they had passed the island of Margarita, and were abreast of the Siete Hermános rocks. The little droguer began to feel the swell of the Carribéan sea, as she cleared the group of lesser Antilles. She now rose in livelier bounds on the waves, which curled under the influence of a light trade wind ; and the motion effectually disturbed the passengers' rest ; although Kapitein Lodewyk would not have exchanged it, for that of the easiest pacing mule on the Spanish main.

When they came on deck, they found Maria del Rosario already there. The schipper, who had ascertained from his cabin-boy that she was awake, had prepared her a seat on a hen-coop, covered with his boat-cloak, and lashed to windward of the companion, near which he stood at the helm. He had also recollected that there was some Curazao chocolate on board; and having made some himself, he had brought it to her in a silver-mounted cocoa-nut, with some cazáda bread; lamenting at the same time, that he had not brought some milk and eggs for her use. The freshness of the sea air, and the novelty of the scene around her, had effectually chased away all the languor and wretchedness she had felt on first embarking. With the elastic spirits of youth, she had reconciled herself to leaving her native land, as to an inevitable misfortune; consoling herself by the reflection, that it was her duty to accompany her father in his exile. Lodewyk Sluiker, notwithstanding his national and professional roughness of manner, could not help feeling interested for her. He endeavoured to entertain her, as he would have amused one of his own children, by pointing out to her the remarkable head-lands as they passed; not forgetting comments on their usefulness, as marks for such and such a harbour. He also called her attention to the flying-fish, as they bounded and fluttered along the ridge of a swell; and to the man-of-war birds, cruising with motionless outstretched wings, as if floating on the eddies of the breeze.

When Don Beltràn and his son appeared, Sluiker gave the helm into the hand of an old gray-headed muláto, with directions to keep a clean full; and advanced to enquire how they had rested. On learning that the schooner's motion rather disagreed with them, he produced a case-bottle, and recommended " la mañana" both by precept and example. He then desired the black cook, who was busy at the galley fire, to bring the breakfast aft; and a plentiful repast was soon spread before him, consisting of fish and yams, turtles' eggs and plantains. His passengers, it is true, did little honour to the provisions set before them; but the worthy schipper found appetite for all. Not content with this manifest triumph, he endeavoured, as is usual in such cases, to argue his guests out of their indisposition, and to persuade them that it existed only in their imaginations; assuring them, that if they would but eat heartily, all their qualms would vanish, as if by magic. Finding them, however, obstinate and incredulous on this point, as landsmen usually are, he betook himself to his long Criollo cigars, which, he owned, might almost be rigged as sliding-gunter poles for his schooner, in case of need. As he leaned against the main-mast, so that the smoke might annoy his lady passenger as little as possible, he began a series of what are usually termed *tough yarns*; interrupting them occasionally, by giving necessary directions to the man at the helm.

As the day advanced, the breeze hauled a few points more round to the Southward, so as to blow perfectly fair; and, towards evening, they could see the small group of Aves islands, right ahead, on the horizon. Several vessels had passed in different directions during the day, to the great delight of the novice; and she had been for some time looking over the stern at one that appeared to be bound the same way, as it was coming rapidly up with the droguer, under a press of canvas. It was a long topsail-schooner, with taunt tapering masts; and its decks were plainly seen to be crowded with men. The helms-man, of whom Maria del Rosario asked some trifling question about this vessel, turned a careless eye upon her; but after looking steadfastly at her for a few moments, he called to the schipper, that a suspicious looking stranger was overhauling them, hand over hand.

Lodewyk broke off in the middle of a long story, and snatching a spy-glass out of the binnacle, reconnoitred the vessel astern; but soon threw aside the glass, exclaiming "Stranger? *dondergöd!* Ik ken 't schip too well. Ik would zweer, by de bruin patch in his voor top-sail, dat it is 't roover of 't Bahamas! Ik heb vallen in mit him, many a time, bevoor to-day, but never zo far to windward as dis. *Voor hèmel's lief, myn hartje!* go below and hide thyzelf in myn berth. Do you, cavalléros, kruipen under 't zeils in 't hold. If he heb zien no man on deck, except mynself and 't scheep's-volk, he will pass 't droguer medout noticing her: but ik fear he is too *waak-zaam* voor dat."

There was no necessity for him to repeat this advice; for his terrified passengers retreated instantly on hearing the alarming intelligence. Lodewyk hastily bent a small Dutch ensign to the halyards; muttering, as he hoisted it to the peak, "Ik doubt Oranje Boven will prove but a slender protection, if he has zien myn live lumber *Wee u!* daar goes op 't zwart vlag! We zal heb a volley directly, for running on. Brail op 't voor-zeil there, some of you *schelms* voorwards! and los 't jib-sheet. *Loef op, maat!* and let her kom to by de wind. Ik zie dat he would spreek us; for he follows right in our wake, and he can be bound voor no island of those ahead. He would niet heave to for us, unless he had zien somewhat nieuw. Ik hoop dere are no *hoofd-dooken*, nor women's gear of any kind, hanging in 't rigging."

Contrary to his expectation, the schooner clewed up her topsails, hauled down the jib, and passing the stern of the droguer, rounded to abreast of her without hailing. When her way through the water was checked, a boat was lowered from the stern davits, and being manned with half a dozen hands, besides several sitters in the stern-sheets, was pulled towards the droguer. When the boat came along-side, several rough-looking marauders, of various nations, and hues of complexion, stepped on board, with cutlasses and pistols in their belts. Their leader, who appeared fitted by his muscular frame, and ferocious expression of countenance, to rule such a lawless band, shook Lodewyk heartily by the hand, addressing him familiarly as "old ship-mate;" and demanded to know what passengers he had on board, and where he had stowed them. The schipper was hesitating whether he had better own to the fact, when his deliberation was cut short by the pirate, who said he had already seen them.

"Never think of denying them, old Sluiker! I keeps too bright an eye to windward to be deceived; so let the gentry coves tumble up slick to muster directly, or I must send somebody for them. I should have passed your droguer without overhauling her, for old acquaintance sake, if they had kept the deck manfully; but such hasty diving below looks tarnal suspicious."

Lodewyk, who trembled for the safety of his female passenger, made haste to call Don Beltràn and his son from their place of concealment. They hesitated so long to obey his summons, that the pirate became impatient, and with a volley of oaths and denunciations of vengeance on their obstinacy, ordered two of his men to "jump down into the hold, and turn to, to start on deck every mother's son they could find." Scarcely had they dropped through the hatchway, when a joyful shout announced their having discovered a prize in the iron chest.

"Pass down a running bowline!" cried one of them; "and stand by to rouse this here yapper on deck. Never mind the passengers this bout! I suppose they are coiled away under some of these sails; but we have made a better land-fall."

All those who had remained in the boat, left her in charge of the bow-man on hearing this welcome news, and crowded round the hatch-way, to assist in hoisting out the chest, the weight of which proclaimed its value to be considerable. When it lay before them in the gang-way, they announced their success, with three hearty cheers, to their shipmates, who had climbed into the schooner's rigging to watch their proceedings. While they were busied lowering it carefully into the boat alongside, their captain called Sluiker aside.

" I guess," said he " old schipper ! you can have no interest in that there kist; or perhaps I might endeavour to save you some part of it. I shall always remember that we two have been on the account together formerly; and although you are now in a quieter line of business, still you have it in your power to be useful to us occasionally. Tell me honestly, Lodewyk, have these passengers of yours got any thing else of the right sort ? If not, I will boom off with my ship-mates, before they think of overhauling your berth ; as you may have some little articles of your own there, which you would not like to lose."

As Lodewyk assured him, with not a few oaths in his peculiar dialect, that there was nothing else of value in the vessel, he again shook hands, and stepping into his boat, ordered her to be shoved off. The pirates pulled merrily for their schooner, singing in chorus the well-known West Indian canoe song ;—

" The captain's gone ashore ;
" The mate has got the key ;
" Hurrah ! my jolly boys,—
" 'Tis grog time o'day."

The boat was cleared and hoisted up, and the schooner filled her sails and stood away for the Westward, before Sluiker recovered from his astonishment at this unwelcome visit. Having made sail on the droguer, and given orders for her to be kept her course, he descended to the cabin, and relieved the novice from the dreadful apprehensions under which she had laboured, while the pirates were on board. He found it a far more difficult task to reconcile Don Beltràn to the loss of his treasure; and it was in vain that he reminded him of the providential escape he and his family had, from falling into the hands of a lawless gang. The unfortunate emigrant was at first stunned by the suddenness of the mischance that had befallen him; and could scarcely credit the reality of his loss. He soon recovered, however, from this apparent apathy, and awoke to a painful sense of total destitution; with a family too, entirely dependent on him for subsistence, and whom he himself had compelled to wander from their home and native land. He had been comparatively calm during his arrest, and subsequent imprisonment, at Caraccas; and had not in reality felt such terror, in the prospect of approaching death, as now overwhelmed him, when anticipating poverty and wretchedness.

His agonies of mind were truly terrifying to his daughter, who had never before seen him, but as the stern stoical parent, whom she had not indeed been taught to love, but whom she nevertheless instinctively respected. He now appeared to her completely bereft of reason, as he alternately uttered the most violent imprecations on the pirates who had robbed him, and wrung his hands in unavailing regret and despair. She once ventured to approach him, for the purpose of suggesting some thoughts of consolation;—she scarcely knew what;—but he repulsed her with violence, and even fierceness, as if anxious to relieve himself, by a vain attempt to throw the blame of his ruin on any one who came in contact with him. He occasionally appeared to look as if expecting consolation from his son Joaquin, for whose sake chiefly he had laboured to amass his wealth. But although the young man was sensible, to its fullest extent, of the misfortune which had befallen them, his thoughts were thoroughly engrossed by his own share in the calamity; and he sat apart in gloomy silence, without uttering a word betokening sympathy in his parent's distress,

Lodewyk, meanwhile, who had at first offered to return to Los Bagres, and land his passengers, but had met with an abrupt, and, as he conceived, haughty refusal, stood for some time at the helm in silence; conscious, doubtless, that his abilities in consolation were not to be relied on. When he found, however, that the violence of Peñuela's despair had worn itself out, he began, in his own phrase, "to mak 't best of a bad job."

"Come, Señor passagier, you must not throw your heart after your doubloons. If 't roovers have taken your *geld-kist*, they have left you your zoon and dochter. For myn part, ik shook like 't weather-leach of a zeil, all 't while they were aan boord, for fear they should take it in their verdoemt heads to search 't *kamertje*, where she was stowed away. As you say you cannot go back to 't main, ik suppose your party is not oppermost to-day. Wat dan? Who knows wat changes 't morgen or naast day may bring? Ik would wager a doubloon to a cut-bit against any government,—patriot, or royalist,—keeping de zelfde berth for twaalf months together. *Inmiddels*, as you must be a king's man, by your running away just now, you may easily get a passage to Cartagéna, or La Havána, where you zal be onder your own vlag, and 't Spaansch government will be bound to maintain you. *Of anders*, if you prefer coming to anker at Santo Tomas, you zal find plenty of royalist *uitgangers*, who fled vrom Caraccas last year, and now contrive to make a tolerable living among the Deensche, in hopes of soon returning. You moet do as they do. De jonker, here, your zoon, is stout enough to work vor you all dree; and ik dare say your dochter has learned *borduuring*, at 't konvent, dat zall be useful to her."

Maria del Rosario caught eagerly at this suggestion, and assured her father that her noviciate had not been passed in idleness; enumerating the different accomplishments she had acquired, such as embroidery, filagree work, &c. which usually form the principal part of a conventual education. Don Beltràn rewarded her with a look of affection, the first she could remember his having bestowed on her; and he sighed, as he reflected how little he deserved sympathy of any kind from her, whom he had been on the point of consigning to the solitude of a convent, and who was even now condemned, through his means, to penury and want.

When night approached, Lodewyk cautioned his passengers against the danger of exposing themselves to the cold sea breeze, after the heat of the day; and Joaquin Peñuela retired at once to the hold, where he stretched himself to sleep on the spare sails. Maria del Rosario, whose attachment to her father appeared to have revived, under these circumstances of difficulty and distress, refused to leave him. She drew close to him, as he sat in silent abstraction on the deck of the small schooner, leaning against the weather bulwark; and watched with timid solicitude for an opportunity of whispering comfort to him. He suffered her to take his hand, but averted his face, as if to repel all attempts at conversation; and continued to gaze in silence on the dark extent of the surrounding ocean.

It was a clear star-light night, and not a sound was heard, but the dashing of the waves against the droguer's bows. The novice's thoughts, which had never yet been accustomed to dwell on either the loss or acquisition of wealth, speedily wandered from the subject that engrossed her father's attention, to the peaceful cloisters of the convent in which she had enjoyed uninterrupted tranquillity;—except for one intrusive thought, which she still reproved, yet unconsciously cherished. She thought also of her kind friend Doña Gertrùdes; and sighed deeply as she remembered how slender were her hopes of ever again embracing her. If she for a moment recollected her father's recent loss, it was only with exulting anticipation of the services she would now be able to render him, and the additional claims they would give her to that affection she so anxiously coveted.

The droguer glided rapidly by the dark rocks of the Aves islands; passing so close as to distinguish the flocks of sea birds at roost, appearing like regular ridges of white marble. Maria del Rosario gazed on them in her reverie, until they faded by degrees from her sight, and she sank into a profound slumber in her father's arms Old Sluiker, who had watched her attentively, stepped softly forward, and laid his boat-cloak gently over her. Her father acknowledged his attention by a grateful pressure of the hand; and continued to ruminate, in melancholy silence, on the prospect before him.

He was well aware, that he had no assistance to expect from the Spanish government at Cuba; for he anticipated the observation that would be made, that he ought to have emigrated at the very commencement of the revolution in Venezuela, if he had been a stanch royalist. The secret services he had occasionally rendered to Monteverde had been punctually paid for; consequently he could have no claim on him, as he no longer had it in his power to be useful as a spy. He was also conscious, what slender pretensions a traitor to his country can have to the sympathy even of his employers; and was too well convinced of the profligacy of a Spanish army, to venture on taking his family with him to Cartagéna, as dependants on the bounty of a royalist general. He therefore determined to establish himself at the island of Santo Tomas; and to obtain, if possible, some commercial situation, as a means of support for himself and his daughter.

He had but little hope from the well-known indolence and selfishness of his son Joaquin. But he flattered himself that, when the youth should be made fully sensible of the absolute necessity for exertion, the instruction he had received from the monigote, or at least his bodily labour, would stand him in stead. After several wakeful hours, he at length closed his eyes, and sank into a disturbed slumber, interrupted by dreams, which repeated in vivid colours the misfortune of the preceding day.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WEST INDIES.—THE NEGRESS'S COTTAGE.

Rest, weary traveller! rest thee to-day,
When the cottager's welcome invites thee to stay;
For what to the heart is so grateful and dear
As the welcome that waits on the cottager's fare.
The Devil's Bridge.

THE first rays of morning awoke Maria del Rosario from her light slumbers; and she gazed around her, unable at first to recollect where she actually was, and by what means she had been transported thither. One glance, however, at the white sails above her, and the blue ocean around, sufficed to remind her that she was indeed an exile's daughter. Her father was still in a heavy, but apparently unsound sleep: his countenance was disordered as if in pain, and his forehead and cheeks were flushed and parched, notwithstanding the coolness of the morning breeze. She resigned to him the cloak that Lodewyk had spread over her; and leaning on the bulwark, contemplated the lovely scenery of the islands to windward, abreast of which the schooner was sailing. To the East, and in the full blaze of sunrise, were seen the naked peaks of Montserrate and Redonda; and more to the Northward, the blue mountains of Santa Eustacia and La Saba towered above the neighbouring islets.

The old mulatto was at the helm; and, as he spoke her native language, Maria del Rosario beguiled the time by questioning him concerning the different islands, with all of which he appeared well acquainted. The schipper at last came on deck, smoking his long cigar, as usual. After kindly expressing a hope, that his fair passenger felt no inconvenience from braving the night air, he proceeded to rouse Don Beltràn, muttering Creole-Dutch exclamations of surprise at the heaviness of his slumber. On awaking, Peñuela found himself totally unable to rise, in consequence of severe head-ache and giddiness. To his daughter's great alarm, Sluiker pronounced him, on examination, to be attacked by that Tropical fever, so fatal to Europeans; and scarcely less certainly so to all creoles, who venture to change their place of abode incautiously, or who expose themselves to sudden and violent vicissitudes of weather. In answer to the anxious enquiries of the novice, Sluiker declared that nothing could be done for him, while aboard the droguer, except to shelter him from the sun until the evening; when, he observed, they would, in all probability, reach the island to which they were bound. He therefore spread an awning for the invalid across the main rigging, beneath which he provided him with as comfortable a couch, as was possible under existing circumstances; recommending that he should be left undisturbed, and strongly warning the novice against exposing herself to the contagion of the dangerous disease. No consideration, however, could prevent her from attending her father with sincere filial affection. She would permit no hand but hers to smooth his rugged pillow, and to offer to his parched lips such beverage as could be prepared for him, in so ill provided a vessel.

As the mid-day heat grew more oppressive, the violence of the fever increased; and the raving of the unfortunate emigrant terrified his daughter. Having never before attended a bed of sickness, except that of some meek, penitent nun, gradually sinking into the grave in the full possession of her senses, and surrounded by all that is consolatory in the aid of religion, and soothing in the sympathy of friends, she had formed no idea of, and was totally unprepared to witness, a death embittered by mental and corporeal agony. She vainly endeavoured to sooth, and meet by argument, what she at first believed to be the suggestions of an over-excited mind, irritated by misfortunes to a partial insanity. Even after she had been undeceived by the more experienced Lodewyk, who was unwearied in his attention and advice, she involuntarily started and shuddered, as she heard her name, and that of her brother, repeatedly called on; one while in the most endearing terms, and the next with the bitterest reproaches and execrations, as he confounded in his frenzy the idea of his children, with the recollection of the recent outrage perpetrated by the pirates. Joaquin, meanwhile, sat on the companion, gloomily looking on; but evidently taking no interest in what was going forward, nor in any way attempting to be of the least service.

Towards the afternoon, they entered the beautiful little archipelago, dedicated by the first discoverers, (in allusion, probably, to the *richness* of the soil), to "La Virgen *Gorda*;" and just before sunset the droguer passed the green island of San Juan, and entered the sheltered harbour of Saint Thomas. The arrival of the small schooner excited no attention whatever among the many cheerful parties, that were walking under the cocoa-nut trees on the beach, or seated on the ramparts of the half dismantled inner fort. Although Maria del Rosario well knew she had not a friend, nor even an acquaintance in the world, except at Caraccas, yet she felt almost disappointed, that not one among the numbers she saw, had come forward to welcome her. An overwhelming sense of loneliness oppressed her, as the droguer came to an anchor near the landing place. As she looked at her father's helpless condition, and recollected the necessity of removing him to the shelter of some stranger's roof, she hid her face on his couch, and burst into tears.

The schipper, who had been busied mooring his little vessel, and launching his jolly-boat from the larboard gangway, where it had been stowed during the passage, now accosted the novice in as soft a tone as he could assume. He entreated her not to distress herself, for he would himself go immediately on shore; and endeavour to procure a lodging at some emigrant's house. When it was a little later, and the streets were not so much crowded, he said, he and a couple of his sailors would carry the sick man to his new quarters.

The coolness of the evening brought with it the usual temporary remission in the more violent symptoms of the fever. Don Beltràn lay in a state of dozing insensibility, which renewed his daughter's apprehensions. She feared it was the precursor of death; and dreaded every moment to see him expire before her eyes, without any attempt having been yet made to save him. She was also embarrassed by the recollection of her father's poverty, and alarmed at the thought of incurring even the necessary expences attending his removal, as she was totally ignorant whether or not he possessed the means of defraying them. Her brother was at that moment purchasing some fruit from a canoe alongside; and, when he approached her to offer her some bananas, she took the opportunity of enquiring whether their father had any funds with him, to pay for the lodging, and requisite attendance. Joaquin professed his ignorance on that subject; but said, that he himself had a few dollars left from his last *mezáda*, which would, he supposed, be sufficient for the present emergency. This greatly relieved her mind; and she waited, with comparatively little impatience, for the arrival of the good-natured schipper.

After a long anxious hour of expectation, Lodewyk returned. He declared that he had in vain offered money in advance, at every house in the emigrants' quarter of the town, and even at the regular boarding houses; for he was obliged to mention his passenger's illness, and that was considered, by every one, an insuperable objection to receiving him as an inmate. As he found it impossible to conquer the scruples of the white inhabitants, he determined to try the well known hospitality of the blacks; and was successful at the cottage of the first *blanchisseuse*, to whom he mentioned his embarrassment. After premising that the place was small, although otherwise comfortable, and perfectly clean, he offered to conduct his passengers thither. Maria del Rosario eagerly expressed her thanks; and, in the first place he carefully removed the invalid; leaving the brother and sister on board, as the boat was too small to contain them all at the same time. In about half an hour he returned, and invited them to accompany him to their lodgings; assuring them that they would find Don Beltràn more comfortably situated, than they perhaps anticipated.

They followed him to the suburb behind the fort. There, on the rise of the hill leading to the plantations, a few neat white-washed cottages stood, totally differing in appearance, and style of building, from any that the emigrants had ever before seen. Maria del Rosario would never have suspected them to belong to laundresses, unless perhaps from seeing the bambu poles, supporting clothes' lines, in the gardens behind. The path by which they ascended, ran along the brink of a deep ravine, which was the channel for a mountain torrent in the rainy season; but now merely contained a small rivulet, struggling down to the sea through large pebbles and fragments of rock. Some black women were seated on these, even at this late hour, singing in shrill chorus, and banging lustily, with small wooden beetles, the linen they were washing, after the West Indian fashion.

The schipper knocked gently at one of the largest cottages, and the door was opened by an elderly but remarkably erect negress, whose good-humoured smile, and laughing black eyes, welcomed her guests before she spoke a word. It was easy to see that she had mustered all her little finery, to do honour to her future inmates. She had dressed herself in a scrupulously clean white muslin gown, with light blue ribbands; and her shoulders were covered with a bright yellow silk shawl. Her shoes were pink satin; and her white cotton stockings would have been faultless, were it not for the open-work of their clocks, which betrayed the sable hue of a daughter of Africa. Her ear-rings were broad circles of gold, set with several ill-shaped and rather yellowish pearls; and a long necklace of gold beads, to which several pieces of Spanish coin, both *escúdos* and *pezétas*,[31] were attached, hung down nearly to her waist. Her hair, which was perfectly woolly, had been tortured into various attempts at plaiting, which projected abruptly like short horns; setting at defiance the efforts of some dozen small tortoise-shell combs, which were stuck into different parts of the *chevélure*.

Lodewyk introduced her as Máma Chepíta; and informed Maria del Rosario that her hostess could understand and speak Spanish, as most West Indian negroes can. He then took his leave, promising to return the next day to enquire after the invalid, previous to sailing. The negress kissed her fair guest's hand, and led her through a small porch, into a room floored with bright red tiles. Its neatness astonished the emigrants; for on hearing Sluiker mention a laundress's cottage, they had formed an idea of a miserable *rancho*, like those they had been accustomed to see at the outskirts of their native city. The windows were, of course, unglazed, on account of the excessive heat of the climate; but they were covered with muslin curtains, of so thin a texture, as to admit the breeze from the harbour, which the cottage overlooked. The chairs were cane-bottomed, and painted in imitation of bambu; and the table, which stood in the middle of the room, was of dark Honduras mahogany, brilliantly polished. Opposite the door was a small side-board, covered with glass of every description, cut and plain, ranged ostentatiously in rows, from the smallest sized liqueur-glasses, to rummers and sangría-cups. Behind all, towered those tall candle-shades, which are rather necessaries than luxuries in a tropical climate, where moths and other nocturnal insects swarm to such a degree, as instantly to extinguish an unguarded light.

Máma Chepíta smiled with gratified vanity, at seeing the notice her young guests took of this piece of negro finery, which is rarely seen on the main, although extremely common on the islands. She invited them to be seated on an old-fashioned sofa, covered with a gaudy chintz, which appeared from its lustre, and the stiffness of its folds, to have been just taken out of the antique cedar chest, where it had been carefully laid by for state occasions. Maria del Rosario expressed an anxious desire to see her father, and the negress led her to a small curtained recess at the upper end of the room, where she showed her a neat couch surrounded by mosquito curtains, under which Don Beltràn appeared to enjoy a refreshing sleep. In answer to the novice's enquiries respecting medical assistance, Máma Chepíta assured her that, unless some unfavourable alteration in the symptoms should occur, it would be needless to call in a doctor; expressing at the same time great dread of the learned faculty, and hinting that Europeans could possibly know nothing about the proper treatment of West Indian fevers. She also pointed to a large glass full of *brevage*, compounded of various herbs which she herself had collected. It stood cooling in the window, close to a jar of that never-failing specific, *naranjáda;* and the negress declared that, with these simples, she would answer for the patient's cure.

Máma Chepíta then opened a drawer, in which she had laid Don Beltràn's clothes, and gave the novice a purse belonging to her father, containing a few doubloons and dollars; likewise the keys of the trunks, which had been brought from the droguer by two of the crew. She showed Joaquin a small closet next to his father's, which she said was to be his bed-room; and led his sister to a neat apartment under the corridor opening into the garden, shaded by a large tamarind tree. When they returned to the sitting-room, they found the table laid for supper, and attended by a young negress, whom Máma Chepíta presented to her guests, as her daughter and their servant. No entreaties could prevail on the hostess to join her guests. She hoped she knew her place better, than to sit in the presence of white people; and pressed them so earnestly to try the fish and tomate, and the *ochra*, that Maria del Rosario, who at first forced herself to partake of those West Indian dainties from a wish to gratify her kind hostess, was soon induced to follow her brother's example, in supping heartily on them. The repast concluded with coffee, which can nowhere be obtained in greater perfection; after which all retired to rest, except Máma Chepíta, who declared her intention of sitting up with the invalid until day-break, when she was to be relieved by her daughter Martha.

CHAPTER XV.

MILITARY PREPARATIONS.—THE MONKS' TRIAL.

There was martial clamour heard
In the convent's sacred halls;
And the noise of armed men
Sounded strange from cloister'd walls.
—It was the vesper hour,
But no vesper then was sung;
Instead of organ, or of hymn,
Iron boot and steel spur rung.

ANON.

As it became generally known that tranquillity had been re-established at Caraccas, the peaceable part of the community, which had fled for safety to the neighbouring villages and plantations, returned to the capital, and employed themselves and their slaves in repairing and rebuilding their shattered houses. At the same time, large bodies of peons were sent in from the country, by the *alcaldes de campo;* and were employed by government, together with the soldiery, in clearing away the ruins of public buildings, burying the numerous bodies that lay beneath them, and erecting temporary barracks and store-houses.

Afflicting accounts were daily received at head-quarters, from different parts of the united provinces of Venezuela, concerning the damage sustained through the earthquake. Although the inhabitants of the other great cities had not imitated the capital, so far as to break out into open revolt, yet the overwhelming calamity had produced considerable disaffection, and had cast a damp on the spirits of the superstitious;—that is to say, the majority of the population. The situation of the country was rendered still more critical, by reports that had found circulation, relative to the Spanish army at Cartagèna. It was generally known, that a strong reinforcement had arrived from Cadiz; and it was asserted, and universally believed, that Monteverde had received positive instructions, to commence a war of extermination on the infant republic.

The province of Coro, which lay between Caraccas and the royalist army, still persisted in refusing to listen to any overtures for joining the union. It was consequently to be apprehended, that the Spanish general would find supplies there, and reinforcements, if necessary, in his march against the capital of Venezuela, which was now daily expected to commence. Miranda therefore exerted himself indefatigably to recruit the exhausted armies of the republic; and to put the dismantled fortresses, on the frontiers, in a defensible condition.

Puerto Cavallo, one of the strongest of these which was also a sea-port town of importance, was entrusted to the command of Colonel Simòn Bolívar, a young native officer, whose intelligence and activity had obtained for him a considerable share of the confidence of the patriot Government. His natural abilities, which were of a superior order, had been cultivated by a liberal education, rarely attainable by his countrymen; and by travel in Spain, France, and some few other European countries. The garrison under his command consisted principally of volunteer corps, from his native vallies of Aragoa. The most distinguished among these was a regiment of cazadores, raised and disciplined by himself, on his paternal estate of San Miguel, near the city of Vitoria; and armed, as well as clothed, entirely at his expence. The officers were all young creoles of the first patriot families in the country; and the soldiers had formerly been slaves on his plantation. They had been freed, to the number of about twelve hundred, when Bolívar was one of the first to set an example of devotion to the cause of liberty, which was subsequently so well followed. This corps was conspicuous, not only for its high state of discipline, but also for its military equipments. It was one of the few in which regularity, in that respect, was at all attended to. The uniform was dark green, a colour well suited to the complexion of most of those who wore it; and on the front of their schacos was first displayed the device, which was afterwards so generally adopted, of "MUERTE, O LIBERTAD!"

The patriot army could not boast, at that time, of any native artillery officers; but this deficiency was supplied by a number of foreign volunteers. As most of these were either Frenchmen, or creoles of Martinico and Santa Lucia, the term

Francezes was applied indiscriminately to all foreigners, at the commencement of the revolutionary war. It is recorded, for instance, in the Venezuelan national song, that—

"Veinte cinco Francézes
"Cargaban su canòn:—
"Alòn, alòn, camína!
"Alòn, mozos, alòn!"

The guerilléros, commanded by the old chief Zaráza, were necessarily objects of suspicion when bivouacked in the neighbourhood of towns and cities; for their habits of foraging, contracted while on a campaign, were rather difficult to shake off, even when among friends and allies. They were therefore detached by Miranda beyond the lagoon of Maracaÿbo, towards the borders of the province of Coro. By this politic arrangement, the Venezuelan Government reaped the united advantages of harrassing their unfriendly neighbours, maintaining a corps of observation in front of the declared enemy, and keeping an useful and efficient, though capricious and irregular, body of men in good humour. It afforded the guerilla facilities of enjoying without interruption those little "*privilegios de guerra*," which must otherwise have been exercised at the expence of their fellow citizens, or, if altogether withheld, would inevitably have led to disgust and desertion.

Zedeño and Monágas, both of whom had previously been peaceable mayor-domos on cattle farms, and had acquired, in that active capacity, considerable local knowledge of the country, now about to be the theatre of war, as well as an intimate acquaintance with the genius and character of the lower orders among their countrymen, came forward from the upper plains of Barcelona, each with a large cavalry force, well mounted, but merely equipped with lances. The negro chief, Piar, (who was afterwards shot by Bolívar's order in the Plaza of Angostura), announced to Miranda, that he was in Cumanà, at the head of a large army of Pardos, both horse and foot; with which he was ready to join the patriot forces, provided the white officers would agree to receive him and his comrades on terms of equality.

Besides these, several small corps were in motion towards head-quarters, under Bermùdez, Maríño, and other leaders, whose enthusiasm, and devotion to their country's cause, it was hoped, would atone for their unavoidable deficiencies in military skill and experience. Lastly, gun-boats of different sizes were prepared in the naval arsenals of La Guayra and Puerto Cavallo, for the protection of those harbours; and the Spanish guarda-costas, which had fallen into the hands of the patriots, were fitted out, and manned with volunteers of all nations; so as to be in readiness to cope with any royalist expedition, that might attempt to make a descent on the coast of Caraccas.

In the midst of these preparations against the foreign enemy, Miranda had not forgotten what was due to the tranquillity of the interior of Venezuela, which had been so treacherously disturbed by the friars, at the time of the late earthquake. He had kept his intentions, on this subject, a profound secret. The Capuchins and Franciscans, therefore, were thrown completely off their guard; and, believing their seditious conduct to have been entirely overlooked, had again begun to appear in public, and to go their usual rounds as mendicants, which were now more than ever necessary, to collect contributions for the repairs of their convents. Their surprise and consternation were great, when, every precaution having been taken to guard against the recurrence of a popular commotion in their favour, the principal friars of both those Monasteries were formally cited to appear before a military commission. This conséjo was ordered to assemble in the refectory of the Dominicans, for the purpose of enquiring into the share the mendicant monks had taken, in the recent disorders in the capital.

The noted Capuchin, Fray Pablo Oyarzùn, although not particularly designated as a ringleader, was too conscious of the active part he had played, not to be seriously apprehensive of the impending consequences. He therefore endeavoured to make it a common cause among all members of the church, as well secular as regular; declaring their religion to be in imminent danger, from the daring and unheard of innovation attempted to be introduced, in summoning ecclesiastics before a court composed of laymen ;—nay, even soldiers. He hurried from church to convent, zealously haranguing, and imploring his brethren to unite in resistance to the illegal and sacrilegious citation. The secular clergy, however, felt rather pleased than aggrieved by an event, which promised to chastise the arrogance and encroaching spirit of the friars ; while the Dominicans, a wealthy peaceful order, had been previously withheld from joining the agitators, through fear of the consequences to their large estates. They were now therefore still more averse from any collision, direct or indirect, with the existing Government.

The smaller monastic bodies, as well as those members of the convents in question, who were not included in the citation, peremptorily declined interfering. The former dreaded the thoughts of identifying their peaceable and insignificant communities with those of their more important and intriguing neighbours. Many of the latter were deterred from openly espousing the cause of their brethren, by a consciousness, that they themselves were in danger of being recognized as their accomplices; and not a few secretly exulted in the prospect thus opened to them, of succeeding to the situations held by their seniors, whose rank, in their communities, had procured for them the unenvied distinction of being selected for examples.

The spacious refectory of the Dominican monastery was fitted up for the solemn occasion, in a style of ornament, which the friars of that order designed to be magnificent and imposing. The walls were hung with white tapestry, disposed in imitation of a tent, as was customary in the convent hall on solemn festivals, and embroidered in compartments, with representations of the principal miracles performed by their patron saint. At the upper end of the hall was a crucifix, ten feet in height, carved and painted with a minute and appalling fidelity to nature. It was supported by a Señora de Dolores, and a Maria Madalena, kneeling one at each side;

and images, as large as life, of Santo Domingo, San Francisco de Paüla, and San Antonio de Padua, frowned portentously from their different stations.

The lower part of the refectory was railed off, for the accommodation of such spectators as chose to be present; and, as soon as the court was opened, became crowded with a motley assemblage of clergy, military, and civilians, in their various and distinct costumes. Their deportment, and probably their thoughts, were as widely different as their dress. The officers, although uncovered, through respect to the court, stood "dangling their bonnets and plumes," and jingling their spurs, with an air of importance; casting, from time to time, looks of contempt and hatred on the accused monks, who sat, with downcast looks, on benches ranged along one side of the hall, from whence the tables had been partially removed, to afford room to the court-martial. The citizens, wrapped in their plain burghers' capótes, looked on with interest and curiosity at the novelty; and expressed, in cautious whispers to each other, their doubts of the legality, or apprehensions of the dangerous precedent, of such a proceeding, according as their veneration for the monastic fraternity, or jealousy of martial law predominated. The friars appeared sedulous to avoid making themselves conspicuous. With their hoods drawn close over their pale thoughtful countenances, they kept themselves in the rear of the other spectators, shrinking back, with every demonstration of humility, as often as the glitter of lace, or the clanging of a sabre on the marble pavement, announced the approach of an officer.

Silence was proclaimed in the court; and Brigadier Cordovèz, (who had been summoned from La Guayra by Government to preside in Miranda's stead,) first took the usual oath in the prescribed form, and then administered it to the *vocáles* in turn; each of whom, as he swore to decide impartially, laid his hand on the hilt of his sword, and said aloud, "*Si, juro!*" The Juez Fiscal first read the commission from the Junta Suprema, by virtue of which the court was assembled. He was proceeding, but was interrupted by Fray Pablo, who rose and exclaimed, "I deny the right of the Junta to give such authority! and I here protest, before heaven and earth, against the competency of any court of laymen, however, and by whomsoever convened, to try ecclesiastics!"

A pause ensued, and the eyes of all present were turned on the daring assertor of the church's privileges. His brethren of the cowl, and fellow prisoners, shrunk from him, as if there were infection in his touch; and ventured not to look up, even to observe what effect his protest had on the court, lest they might be suspected of coinciding with him in the opinion he had so boldly expressed. The vocáles stared in each other's faces, as if doubting whether they had heard right. The more intelligent among them turned over the leaves of that useful manual, styled *Colon de Consejos*, but in vain; for this was evidently a case which the learned Spaniard, who is the oracle of courts martial, had not contemplated as likely to occur. The majority, who gave themselves but little trouble concerning the niceties of law, merely twisted their moustachios, and muttered something, scarcely audible, about the usual modest assurance of monks; while one member of the court, less ceremonious than his colleagues, half whistled, half hummed, the well known Carracqueñan song, [32]

> "El frayle de la Vitòria es un padre escrupulòso!"

to the undisguised amusement of his junior comrades outside the bar. The little president, Don Ygnacio Cordovéz, fidgetted for a while in a fruitless attempt to be delivered of a suitable reply. At length, having consulted in a whisper the vocàles on his right and left, he said, with as much solemnity as his nature permitted him to assume, "This court will not permit the authority of the Junta Suprema to be questioned; seeing it has been recognized by the unanimous voice of the Venezuelan nation. The court pronounces the protest it has just heard, frivolous and of no avail, inasmuch as the crime, of which the prisoners stand charged, forfeits, of necessity, their *fuero de sacerdóte*, and renders them amenable to martial law."

On hearing this decision, the members of the court resumed their judicial gravity, and regarded the baffled friar with austere looks. He sat down, and appeared to watch attentively for some flaw in the proceedings of the court, on which he might found his defence. The Fiscal proceeded to read the charges, which were various, but all tending to the same general accusation, of sedition, and rebellion against the republic. Fray Pablo, undismayed by his previous failure, again rose. He demanded to know, with what show of justice he and his brethren could be accused of rebellion, by those who were themselves actually guilty of a revolt against their lawful sovereign.

"Beware, misproud and sacrilegious men!" said he, "how you persist in this mockery of justice. The present state of anarchy, in which Venezuela is plunged, cannot,—be assured! endure much longer. Tremble, therefore, to think what will be your doom, when the towers and lions of Spain shall once more wave over the walls of this city!"

The friar had strangely miscalculated the effect which he had expected to produce by this address. His auditors without the bar, both civilians and military, broke into a confused murmur of disapprobation; and the vocáles called on their president to silence the audacious monk. Cordovèz, who had acquired confidence from the success of his former harangue, desired him, in an authoritative tone, to abstain from such seditious language: assuring him, that the expressions he had permitted himself to use, would have their due weight in the decision of the court. Several soldiers were then called by the Fiscal, and deposed to having heard the inflammatory harangues of the prisoners, whom they identified: describing the effects which their exhortations had produced on the populace. All agreed, in bearing witness to the active part taken by Fray Pablo in the insurrection; and in declaring, that he acted as ringleader of the mob, which the patriot troops found assembled in the Plaza, on the afternoon of the recent attack.

When their examination was concluded, Fray Pablo objected to their testimony being received, on the ground of their being soldiers, and consequently under the direct influence of the court, which he ventured to tax with sinister intentions, in selecting witnesses from among a body of men notoriously at enmity with the friars. He was proceeding to complain, that not a single impartial evidence had been produced, when he was thunderstruck by hearing the name of Fray Nicolas Polillo called, and seeing the portly Confesór del Carcel step forward, and stand before the court.

On being desired by the Fiscal to declare what he knew, concerning the recent insurrection in the capital, as connected with the prisoners whom he saw on their trial, he stated that, on the morning of the late terrible earthquake, he had been sent for to the jail, for the purpose of administering spiritual consolation to a prisoner, whom he understood to be under sentence of death. He had been surprised, while in the condemned cell, by that awful convulsion of nature, by which his life was placed in the most imminent jeopardy; for his *penitente* made his escape through a fissure in the wall, far too small to admit of his following, and ungratefully left him there to perish, without an attempt at rescuing him.

"In that cell," continued he, "did I pass the remainder of the day, and the entire night, without the least sustenance, (except a few cigars which I had providentially brought with me,) and in momentary dread of perishing by that most horrible of deaths, starvation. However, praised be my patron Santo Domingo, the next morning early, when I was just at the last gasp, between terror and famine, a mob of *rotozós* commenced removing the rubbish, which blocked up the entrance to the dungeons, with the intention of releasing some of their fraternity, who, they little doubted, were to be found therein. I contrived to make myself heard, although my voice was feeble through inanition, (as it well might be, after four and twenty mortal hours fasting,) and they burst the door of my cell. But instead of expressing their thankfulness, at being the humble instruments of my rescue from the jaws of death, as it were, they unfeelingly and irreverently scoffed at my misfortune. Nay, one among them,—Ave Maria!—said, with a profane oath, that he would not have toiled so hard, had he known it were a *cogóte-raspádo;* but that he believed it had been his compadre Bilchez, (a noted highway robber, be it remembered,) who was in the dungeon, under sentence!"

Here the Fiscal interposed; and requested the reverend confessor to confine himself to stating what he knew concerning the prisoners.

"Assuredly, learned Sir! I am presently coming to that point. At the head of those ruffians, (I sorrow to say it,) was Fray Pablo Oyarzùn; who, instead of rebuking them for their rude deportment towards me, or attempting to divert them from their unlawful design of prison-breaking, was comforting and encouraging them thereunto. He also sought to win me over to his party; declaring that he had full authority, from Monteverde, for his attempt to bring about a counter-revolution. He made me many tempting offers, in the name of the royalist government, which, he assured me, would shortly resume the command of Venezuela; but truly I am a peaceable man, and content with my lot. As the proverb saith,

'Con paja, ó con heno,
'El xergon lleno!'

"More I cannot depose touching this matter; for I forthwith retired to this very refectory, which, I may say with truth, has been my abode during these days of disquiet and alarm; excepting only such hours as I passed in my cell, or in the convent chapel."

Fray Nicolas was then permitted to retire; and the prisoners were called on for their defence. They all expressed their contrition, and threw themselves on the mercy of the court, except Fray Pablo, who declared that he gloried in the share he had taken in the late attempt to re-establish the regal authority in Venezuela. He upbraided his brethren with their pusillanimous behaviour; and again menaced the court with the utmost vengeance of the Spanish army, which, he affirmed, would in a few days more be in possession of the capital. The hall was then cleared, and Cordovéz called the attention of the vocáles to the case before them. He descanted, at some length, on the turbulent disposition constantly manifested by those two mendicant communities; and on the dangers that would result from suffering this last outrage, of which they were the main cause, to pass with impunity.

The deliberation of the court was speedily concluded. It was unanimously agreed, to sentence all the prisoners to banishment from the territory of Venezuela, for various terms, in proportion to their criminality, and rank in their respective convents. A few members at first hinted, that the contumacious ringleader merited a still more severe doom; but they contented themselves with voting, that the court should mark its sense of his outrageous behaviour, by ordering him to be conducted, in irons, beyond the limits of the republic, never to return. The place selected, for their exile, was the province of Coro; and an official letter was addressed to the commander-in-chief, desiring he would appoint a sufficient escort, as soon as convenient, to conduct them to the frontiers.

The prisoners were then called in, and made acquainted with their sentences. It was listened to, by some of them, with the indifference natural to those who have no families to leave; and by others with exultation, for it relieved them from the dreadful apprehensions under which they had laboured during their trial. A military court, indeed, had been associated, and not without reason, in their terrified imaginations, with ideas of scaffolds and executioners; disagreeable objects, which they had often gazed at with indifference, when the fate of others was concerned, but which now haunted them in all their most horrid colours.

Fray Pablo Oyarzùn alone appeared unmoved; and was on the point of once more addressing the court, when Cordovèz rose and hastily dissolved it. He intimated to the prisoners, at the same time, that they were to consider the refectory as their place of confinement, until the morning, when they were to set out for their destination.

CHAPTER XVI.

BANISHMENT.—THE GUERILLA —A SKIRMISH.

Strange gusts of wind from mountain glen
Swept o'er the lake, then sunk agen.
Mine eye but heard that sullen sound,
Which like an earthquake shook the ground;
And spoke the stern and desperate strife
That parts not but with parting life.
Lady of the Lake.

A TROOP of carbineers was in readiness, in the outer court of the convent of Santo Domingo, at day-break, commanded by Don Carlos Sepúlveda, who had been selected by Miranda to superintend the removal of the banished friars. Forty mules stood saddled for their conveyance; being the animals usually employed by ecclesiastics on a journey, for their steadiness and easy pace. Among them was a tall powerful *macho,* destined to carry Fray Pablo; conspicuous for an embroidered woman's sillon, which was provided for his accommodation, as his fetters would not admit of his riding *á la ginéte.*

A crowd of the lower order of Caracqueños had assembled at the gate, from various motives, to witness the friars' departure. The females, who were here and elsewhere their enthusiastic partizans, had each prepared some offering for her confessor, of provisions, or other little articles that might be useful to him on the road. The men, among whom monks were by no means favourites, came to enjoy the discomfiture of those objects of their jealousy and superstitious dread; and the children gathered round from all quarters, to lend their ever ready shout of acclaim to the novel procession. The prisoners at length came forth, and the hum of curiosity subsided, as they began to mount in sullen silence; the clang of Fray Pablo's fetters being distinctly heard, as he shuffled across the paved quadrangle to his mule, on which he was placed by two of his escort.

The sobs of the devotees became more audible, as the preparations for the march proceeded; and, when the banished friars reached the Plazuela, in front of the convent, those who had offerings to make, pressed forward between the files of cavalry, to kiss the hands and sandaled feet of their spiritual guides, whom they looked on almost, if not altogether, in the light of martyrs. Fray Pablo was commencing a farewell harangue to the populace; but Don Carlos, who had received instructions to prevent any exhibition of the sort, gave the word —"*Paso dè tróte!*"—and the procession moved forward at a brisk pace; amidst the shrill screams of children, and the irrepressible laughter of the men, at the ludicrous contrast between the dress, demeanour, and style of horsemanship, of the prisoners and their guards.

As government apprehended some danger of popular commotion, should the friars pass through any disaffected town on their way to the frontiers of Venezuela, Sepúlveda led the escort by the most unfrequented route, and carefully avoided halting in or near any populous village. On the evening of the fourth day, he arrived at the southern shore of the great Laguna de Maracāybo, just at the entrance of the valley, through which the rapid river Catacumba empties itself into the lake. Leaving to his subaltern officer the management of the party, while crossing the stream in canoes, Don Carlos passed over, attended by his ordenanza; and rode down to the border of the lake, in search of a commodious spot for a bivouac that night. His attention was attracted by a smoke, which curled upward through the dark foliage of a mahogany tree. On examining what neighbours he was likely to have so near his halting place, he found a small Indian camp, consisting of eight or ten Cachirīs, with their wives and children.

An old man, whom he recognised as the Cazique Pichiloncöy, advanced to meet him; and cordially invited him to share their meal, being some fine bagre fish from the lagoon, which one of the squaws was stewing in an earthen olla, with wild tomátes, and bird-pepper from the woods. Sepúlveda gladly accepted this offer, which was by no means unwelcome after his long ride. He therefore despatched his ordenanza to the pass of the Catacumba, with directions for his subaltern, as to where he was to halt; and dismounting, he joined the hospitable group. Having answered the Cazique's enquiries concerning their mutual friend Tovàr, he in turn questioned his host about Zaraza's flying camp. He learned that the guerilla had skirmished, the very day before, with a column of Spanish cavalry that had appeared on the plains of Harínas. Zaraza had been compelled to fall back on the borders of the lake. There he was encamped, only a few leagues off, in hourly expectation of being attacked by a superior royalist force, which was advancing against him.

On hearing this piece of intelligence, Sepúlveda resolved to hasten to the old chief's assistance. Accordingly, when the escort arrived, he left a small detachment with the Lieutenant, to take care of the prisoners, who were now within a day's march of their destination; and set off with the main body of the carbineers, in the direction Pichiloncōy had mentioned. After a smart gallop of a couple of hours, he left the woody glades, which skirt that part of the lake, and entered on an extensive plain. At the farther end of this, the sun was just sinking behind the chain of lofty mountains, forming the eastern barrier of the province of Santa Marta.

A flight of vultures, which were wheeling lazily round in airy circles, pointed out the situation of the camp; and the carbineers were soon apprised, that they were in the immediate neighbourhood of the guerilla, by the numerous carcasses of cattle which lay in the long grass, half skinned, and scarcely touched by the wasteful epicures, excepting the ribs and some other choice parts. Few of their horses could be seen, for the greater part lay stretched in the luxuriant herbage of the savanna; and their riders could scarcely have been discovered, had it not been for the rows of long slender lances planted upright in the ground, whose glittering points, and fluttering bannerols, alone distinguished them from the tall reeds growing on the borders of the adjoining lake. It was not until the sound of the horses' hoofs echoed close to the guerilléros, that they started up, with a confused discordant clamour, from the ponchos on which they had been indolently reclining, and prepared to seize their lances. On seeing the well-known uniform of the carbineers, they again seated themselves, and resumed their games of cards and dice, which had been interrupted.

On enquiring for their general, Sepúlveda was directed to the spot where he was seated with several of his subordinate chiefs, smoking his *churumbéla*,[33] and watching with apparent interest the chances of a game at briscàn, which two of them were playing on a manta spread before them. Zaraza welcomed the young aide-de-camp, and expressed his joy at his opportune arrival; saying that his light cavalry had been rather roughly handled, by some royalist dragoons, in a late skirmish; and that he had sent an express across the lake, to warn Miranda that the Spanish army had opened the campaign.

" I observe all your men carry carbines," said he, " which will be very useful to us in this savanna. We might as well attempt to charge in a ripe maiz field, as through this long grass ; [34] and I dare say that was in a great measure the reason why we got something the worst of it yesterday. And yet, for my own part, I could never approve of introducing *bocas de fuego* among my lads ; as I am convinced it would inevitably spoil them for lancers, which is the only true manly mode of warfare. But had you not better dismount your troop ? they will find abundance of beef not far off. Or, if they are like my men, and prefer killing every one for himself, yonder is a herd of cows near the lagoon, which we drove with us yesterday from Los Reyes."

Sepúlveda accepted his offer of provisions, but declined encamping near the guerilla ; because, not to mention the contagious example of such undisciplined troops, he had already seen a sufficient specimen of their carelessness, to be convinced of the necessity of redoubled vigilance on his part ; especially as the enemy was said to be advancing. He therefore ordered his men to cut themselves rations from the nearest carcasses, to collect drift-wood for fuel, and to fill their calabashes with water at the edge of the lake. Then taking leave of Zaraza for the night, he led his detachment a few hundred yards in advance ; and bivouacked with the usual precautions observed by an out-line picket.

It was fortunate for Zaraza's guerilla, that this handful of regular troops was in front of his position; for a little after midnight, the " *Quien vive ?*" of a patrole, followed by the report of a carbine, announced the approach of an enemy. Sepúlveda's men had scarcely started from the ground on which they lay, and mounted their horses, when they heard the trampling of cavalry, and were almost instantly charged by a squadron of Spanish dragoons, who had mistaken the carbineers for guerilléros. When they were close upon him, Don Carlos gave the word to fire, and a volley was delivered among them, the effect of which could not be distinctly seen; but, from the cries of the wounded, and the number of masterless horses which were seen to gallop off in different directions, it might be presumed to have done considerable execution. The loud voice of their commanding officer was heard, endeavouring to rally his disordered troops; but Sepúlveda anticipated his intended movement, by ordering a charge in his turn, which was promptly and effectually executed. The enemy fled in confusion; and Don Carlos, content with having repulsed them, halted his carbineers, and waited until day-light should enable him to discover by what force his late antagonists were supported. He at the same time despatched a non-commissioned officer to Zaraza's bivouac, to acquaint him with the result of the recent attack, and to urge him strongly to move his guerilla forward from the position he had chosen, as he was in evident danger of being out-flanked and surrounded.

Day broke slowly over the broad lake, and the morning breezes rolled from its sullen waters thick masses of fog, which mingled with the night mist hovering over the savanna, and rendered it impossible to distinguish a single object at a few paces distance. Sepúlveda strained his eyes in a fruitless attempt to penetrate this screen, which concealed from him the enemy's line; but he was already made aware, that a considerable body was in the field, by the various distances and directions in which he heard the Spanish revelliez played, by the martial music of both cavalry and infantry. His own troop was so close to the corps with which it had been engaged, that he could distinctly hear their morning roll-call, and the neighing of their horses. The fog floated past in thinner clouds, and the sun was dimly seen rising on the eastern side of the lagoon; near which the guerilla might now be distinguished, mounted, and lounging in different attitudes, on their rough looking horses. The mist at length rolled upwards in one dense volume; and exposed to view the splendid scene of a battle field in full array.

In front, and within half musket-shot, were the dragoons of Numancia, with their brazen helmets and black horse-tails; forming, together with several other corps of heavy and light cavalry, the first line of the Spanish army. At a considerable distance in the rear, were seen the glittering bayonets of the columns of infantry, just appearing above the high grass. From the numerous stands of colours, that waved along the second line, Sepúlveda could calculate the royalist force to be far superior to that, which Miranda was at present able to bring into the field. He had little time to waste in idle speculation; for he clearly saw, that the cavalry on the right of the enemy's line would have it in their power to cut off his retreat, by occupying the wood through which he had advanced the preceding evening. He therefore rapidly crossed that part of the plain, which lay between him and the defile, without waiting to consult Zaraza; and, having halted in front of the wood, sent to summon his lieutenant's detachment to his assistance, desiring him to abandon the charge of the prisoners.

Zaraza's guerilléros had nearly reached the wood, when the Huzares de la Reyna, who had advanced to intercept their passage, charged and scattered them after a short struggle. They would have been surrounded, and probably cut off to a man, had it not been for the carbineers, whom Sepúlveda led to their assistance; and who skirmished so sharply with the Huzares, separated as they were in pursuit, that they checked their progress, and enabled their friends to gain the shelter of the defile. Nevertheless, the guerilléros were so far from attempting to rally there, that they did not even halt; but crowded in a panic to the pass of the river Catacumba, which they swam, and dispersed themselves through the neighbouring country. Sepúlveda regained his position in the wood; but quickly observed, that he was deserted by the troops which he had so successfully supported. He nevertheless maintained his post, until the near approach of the enemy's infantry rendered it no longer tenable.

As he retreated through the wood, skirmishing with the advanced guard of the pursuers, he passed Pichiloncöy's little encampment; where he found the Indian families seated calmly on the ground, with their usual affectation of indifference. It might however be plainly seen, that this apparent apathy was only assumed; by the anxious looks which the females cast after their children, who had crept through the underwood towards the scene of conflict, impelled by the restless curiosity of infancy. The men, on seeing the carbineers arrive, heated by exertion, and blackened by the smoke of the fray, advanced to meet them with calabashes, full of water; that had been hung up in readiness, among the branches of their leafy camp, as if anticipating the occasion for which such refreshment might be required.

Far different was the greeting met with by the detachment, from the friars whom it had so lately guarded, and who were assembled in a small glade, through which it had to pass. They were emboldened, by the near approach of the royalist army, and exasperated, beyond the bounds of their ordinary caution, by a misfortune which had befallen them, since they had lost the protection of their escort. Some stragglers from the guerilla, it appeared, had fallen in with them; and not contented with plundering their alforjas of the necessaries they contained, had stripped the unlucky exiles of their girdles, in which, after the fashion of mendicants, they had concealed their hoards of coin. They therefore took this opportunity of expressing their exultation at the patriots' discomfiture, by chaunting in chorus the anthem "*Bendíto ý alabádo sea! &c.*" prescribed to be used in their chapels, on occasions of peculiar rejoicing and jubilee.[35] Fray Pablo Oyarzùn, not satisfied with this indirect mode of triumphing over his late escort, took his station on a mossy hillock, which covered the roots of some decayed forest trees; and from thence, as from a pulpit, fulminated his anathema on the retreating soldiers. One or two of them, however, less patient, or more revengeful than their comrades, discharged their carbines in the direction of the orator, when they saw their officer's attention otherwise engaged; and he judged it most prudent to descend hastily from his rostrum, and conceal himself from observation, by mingling with his brethren.

The bugles of the Spanish cazadores now began to ring through the glades of the wood: and Sepúlveda was compelled to hasten his retreat to the river Catacumba. Having crossed it, he established his troop in a range of bodegas, built on the summit of a steep bank for the accommodation of travellers, when detained by floods during the rainy season; taking care, previously, to abandon to the current all canoes and piraguas belonging to the ferry, so as to impede as much as possible the passage of the Spanish army.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ISLAND.—THE NEGRO MARKET.—THE SPANISH PLANTER.

> He was a man as dusky as a Spaniard,
>   Sunburnt with travel, yet a portly figure;
> Though colour'd, as it were, within a tan-yard,
>   He was a person both of sense and vigour.
>
> *Beppo.*

MARIA DEL ROSARIO rose early, the morning after her arrival at Saint Thomas's; and found her hostess's daughter in close attendance on Don Beltràn, in whose health she was rejoiced to learn there was a very perceptible amendment. He was in a sound and, apparently, refreshing slumber; and the young negress said, that he had woke at an earlier hour, and had evinced no symptoms of delirium, having enquired, in a collected rational manner, concerning his children, and his present place of abode. At that moment, Martha's mother entered the room. Having congratulated her young guest, on the improvement in the invalid's health, (which she did not fail to ascribe to the *naranjáda* she had given him,) she proposed to shew her the town, of which she was about to become an inhabitant.

As they proceeded up the hill overhanging the harbour, by the side of the rivulet, which was now crowded with *lavandéras*, in the full exercise of their gossiping profession, Máma Chepíta pointed out, with no small pride, a group of her hired servants, who were working for her advantage. She observed, that she herself had been for some years free; and that, although her daughter Martha was as yet hired by her from her master, a wealthy Spanish settler, she had hopes of being able to pay for her freedom, in a few months.

The path led between small patches of cultivated ground, from which (as it was a holiday among the plantations,) numerous families of negroes were issuing, bearing on their heads baskets of fruit and vegetables, to sell on their own account in the market. Half way up the hill, at a short distance from the road, was a spot of rugged waste land, overgrown with wild limes and tamarinds, and shaded by a few coco-nut trees. Under these were the ruins of an irregular fortification, of rude construction and ancient date, which tradition ascribes to the Buccaneers, who used in former days to make this island, and the rest of the Virgen Gorda group, their places of rendezvous. From this eminence, Máma Chepíta pointed out to the novice the enchanting scenery which it commanded, of both town and harbour, far below them.

In the former, the flat roofs of the principal dwelling-houses, covered with white chunam, were contrasted with the picturesque palm an d cabbage trees, and the dark coloured evergreens, which filled the surrounding gardens. The calm unruffled bosom of the latter reflected a cloudless sky, and the tapering masts of the merchant vessels of different classes, which floated on it, with well-bleached sails hanging loose to dry, and the many-coloured ensigns of their respective nations, drooping in the still morning air. Innumerable boats, and light canoes, were crossing it in all directions, scarcely dimpling the surface of the dark blue mirror over which they glided; while the wild sound of the conch-shell, blown in the foremost of a line of fishing piraguas, announced their return from a successful night's toil. The sea, outside the bay, was mottled by the fresh trade wind, under the influence of which a tall bark was reeling along in her rapid course, towards the neighbouring island of Puerto Rico, that loomed mistily in the offing.

Máma Chepíta pointed to the south, towards which the novice was intently gazing; and said, "Your home lies in that direction, Señorita! I also used once to look that way, for hours together, on holidays such as this; for I was born in La Trinidad, and little thought, when I was of your age, ever to have left it. But my master, Don Anselmo Urrútia, sold his plantation, when the island fell into the hands of the English,—for he could not endure a heretic government,—and bought another estate within a few miles of this spot, on which he still resides. I had been married, not many months before, to a fellow slave on the same plantation; and you may suppose it was hard, even on us negroes, to be torn asunder. But I was an in-door slave, and my husband a field peon, so that there was no help for it. There had not been time for him to save sufficient money to buy my freedom; so I was brought here, and he was sold with the estate. Poor Beño!—he worked hard night and day for some years, as I afterwards heard, to collect the sum my master demanded; and at length sent it to me by a droguer belonging to his new owner, which always used to bring me news of him. But the vessel was lost in a hurricane, within sight of this harbour; and, when he found that his hopes of seeing me, and his infant child, were once more put off, he pined away, and died of a broken heart. Ah, Señorita! you are now happy in your own family: may you never know what it is to be separated from one you love!"

The novice's cheek flushed with the consciousness, that she was at that moment thinking more of those she had left behind, than of father or brother; and she secretly resolved to call to mind her hostess's melancholy story, as a warning against indulging in fruitless regrets and vain expectations. They then descended the hill by a different road, leading to the market-place, where the lively scene soon dispelled all unpleasant recollections from both their minds. Stalls made of bambu were erected along three sides of the square. On these, yams, plantains, green maiz, and every other variety of tropical vegetable, mingled with pine-apples, avocate pears, and coco-nuts, were offered for sale by negresses looking the pictures of good humour and cleanliness, dressed in bright chintz gowns, and neat Bandanna head-gear. Little negro children were seated on the grass in the centre, with baskets of chickens and eggs, and plantain leaves full of ochra, bird-pepper, and tomátes; and the incessant chattering of buyers and sellers, in creole French and Spanish, and in broken English and Danische, emulated the confusion of Babel.

Among the spectators, who had been assembled here merely by curiosity, were several elderly negroes, swelling with all the importance of conscious freedom. Their white hats, pink silk umbrellas, and ostentatious display of heavy watch-chains and seals, procured for them the low bows and curtsies of their less fortunate sable brethren; salutes which they scarcely vouchsafed to acknowledge, farther than by a gracious and condescending wave of the hand. A more busy class, were the mates and stewards of European merchant vessels; men whose robust frames, and florid countenances, bore sufficient evidence to their being recently arrived. Followed by their respective cabin-boys, with well-filled market baskets, they bustled through the throng, exclaiming, as they passed each other, against the insufferable heat of the climate, and clearing entire vegetable stalls at a purchase, in their eagerness to enjoy a sufficient "fresh mess." Every body made way for these *griffins*, as they are usually termed; even those important personages, the black cooks of hotels, and domestics catering for private families. These watched the sailors' anxiety to buy, and readiness to pay the most extravagant prices, with a grin of civil contempt for their inexperience; observing, with a shrug, as they turned to make their more economical market, —"Massa Griffin alway gib what him dealer ask! —No wonder neger market-fellers so sarcy."

There were also several groups of slipshod creole inhabitants, and foreign settlers, lounging here on their return from their morning bath, in the retired bay behind the fort. Their sallow bilious complexions, and negligent attire, gave sufficient indications of the enervating effect of tropical climates on the constitutions of Europeans, and of their descendants for many generations. These insular fashionables gazed on the novice with a listless stare, that embarrassed her greatly. She was on the point of expressing a wish to return to the cottage, when a tall elderly Spaniard, wrapped in a loose capote, and wearing a broad palm-leaf sombrero, beckoned to Máma Chepita, who obeyed the signal with an alacrity, that bespoke him to be a person of consequence;—at least in her eyes. After asking a few questions, which Maria del Rosario could not help suspecting to refer to her, as he repeatedly turned his eyes on her while speaking, he passed on; and the negress returning said, that her late master, Don Anselmo, had been enquiring what Caracqeñan young lady she was attending.

" He said he knew you to be from Venezuela by your dress;" said Máma Chepita; " and, when I told him you was my lodger, and that your father, who had just arrived from the Main, was lying sick at my house, he said he would call in the course of the day, to enquire whether he could be of any service. It has happened fortunately that we met him; for he is a wealthy planter, and though rather severe among his slaves, very charitable and generous to his equals, especially his countrymen. The poor sick gentleman may be considered the same as one, being a native of the Spanish colonies; so I hope, Señorita, things may turn out better than you expect. Lodewyk Sluiker, who brought you over, has told me how your father has been plundered by the pirates."

They then left the market-place; and when they reached the cottage, they found Don Beltrân sitting up and conversing with the schipper, who had called, according to promise, for the purpose of wishing them farewell previous to his departure. He saluted Maria del Rosario, with all the frankness and cordiality of an old friend. Having expressed his hope, that she was pleased with her hostess, and with the accommodations of the cottage, he offered to convey any letter or message for her to the Main, observing, that he intended to beat out of the harbour that forenoon, with the first of the sea-breeze. The novice looked to her father for permission; but he drily thanked the schipper, and said that he wished for no sort of correspondence with that unhappy country, until it had renounced its rebellion, or should have been reconquered by the armies of its lawful sovereign;—an event, which he flattered himself was not far distant. His daughter acquiesced with a sigh; for she had promised Doña Gertrudes to write her a few lines, from wherever her destination might be.

Lodewyk then rose to take leave; and after hemming for a while, as if irresolute, he exclaimed, "*Donder!* het zal be zo. Zie you, myn heer! dis has been an unlucky trip voor you; and here you staand, medout a shot in 't locker. Zo ik zeide by myn zelf, ik zal take share and share alike met you of 't bad luck; hoping for better next time. Hier is 't gelt you gave me for your *vracht;* except one doubloon dat is gone for harbour-dues, and a month's huis-rent to your landlady. The horsen and muilen you left at Los Bagres zal pay voor all, of zo be they get safe to Curazao. Zoo, béter geluk, myn vriend! *vaarwel mýn schoon jungfrauw!* Máma Chepíta, leent us your hand! Zie dat you take goed care of myn passagieren, voor oud acquaintance sake."

So saying, and without waiting for an answer, honest Sluiker threw down the gold on the invalid's bed, and disappeared immediately. This unexpected act of generosity, from a man of such an unpolished exterior, drew tears of gratitude from Maria del Rosario. The hostess contributed her share of praise; declaring that, although her old friend Lodewyk lay under the imputation of being a smuggler, and there was even a report in circulation, that he had formerly belonged to a still more lawless and dangerous fraternity, yet there was not a kinder hearted schipper in the droguer trade. Don Beltràn assented, though rather ungraciously; complaining, at the same time, of the disagreeable necessity under which he laboured, of being obliged to a man in Sluiker's station of life.

Joaquin now entered the cottage, and, in answer to his father's enquiries, said that he had been forming some acquaintances among the young royalist emigrants; several of whom were on the point of sailing for Cartagena, to offer their services to Monteverde, in aid of an expedition it was understood he was about to undertake. Máma

Chepíta, and her daughter Martha, then spread the table with a substantial West Indian breakfast, which might have tempted far more languid appetites than those of her two young guests; and the elder negress assured Don Beltràn, that in a few days he would be sufficiently recovered to partake with his son and daughter.

After siesta in the afternoon, Máma Chepíta announced a visitor; and Don Anselmo Urrútia entered the room. Whether it was that Maria del Rosario had been prejudiced against him, by her hostess's narrative in the morning, or that his manners and address were in reality repulsive, she thought she had never seen a more disagreeable Gallégo. He had exchanged his capote, and plain morning clothes, for an antiquated full dress suit of black, in which he bore no small resemblance to Cervantes' "Knight of the Mournful Visage." Addressing the novice, with all the formality of a Spanish Hidalgo, softened by such a condescending air of patronage, as he conceived suitable to the occasion, he paid her some awkward compliments, at which she found no small difficulty to preserve her gravity, and enquired after the health of her father.

On being introduced to his bed side, he seated himself, and immediately entered on the subject of colonial politics; reprobating the principles and measures of the revolutionists, in a strain of violent ultra loyalty. Don Beltràn having given him to understand, that he had been compelled to emigrate on account of his devotion to the cause of the mother-country, he expressed his satisfaction at having the good fortune to make his acquaintance; and begged that, as soon as his health would permit, he would honour him by visiting his plantation at Caõbas, together with his son and daughter, and making as long a stay there as would suit his convenience. Don Beltràn, who had always been blindly prejudiced in favour of all natives of Spain, expressed his acknowledgments in suitable terms; and was readily induced to detail every circumstance connected with his leaving Venezuela, and his passage from Los Bagres; not forgetting his unfortunate meeting with the pirate schooner, and the serious loss he had thereby sustained, which he owned had nearly left him penniless. Don Anselmo made no comment on his recital, but renewed his general offers of assistance; and then took his leave, promising to repeat his visit the following day.

This interview rekindled in Peñuela's bosom all the ardour for political intrigue, that had been his besetting foible, but had lain dormant since his arrest and imprisonment at Caraccas; and he eagerly desired to be once more in a situation, that would afford him opportunities of recruiting his scattered finances. With this view, he resolved to pay assiduous court to his new acquaintance; flattering himself that, by a skilful display of royalist principles, and an exaggerated statement of his sufferings, and losses sustained by his adherence to them, he might induce the wealthy Spaniard to interest himself, in his favour, with the colonial Government; so as either to obtain for him a pecuniary reimbursement, or an indemnification, by means of some lucrative situation, at Cartagéna or the Havána. He therefore became doubly anxious for a speedy recovery; and insisted, much to Máma Chepita's mortification, on a medical man being immediately summoned.

Joaquin Peñuela volunteered his services to enquire for one, among his emigrant acquaintance. He soon returned with a travelling French practitioner, who had lately arrived at Saint Thomas's in the course of a tour through the windward islands; and who, as his advertisement declared, "had been induced to postpone his intended departure for a few days, in compliance with the urgent solicitations of his numerous and respectable patients." Having enquired into the invalid's symptoms, and felt his pulse, protecting himself at the same time from infection, by means of a muslin handkerchief profusely sprinkled with aromatic vinegar, he retired to an open window, from whence he proceeded to deliver his opinion. In the first place, as a matter of course, he disapproved of everything that had been done, in the way of cooling and refreshing the patient; and directed a totally different system to be adopted, by keeping him warm, and administering tonics and stimulants. He next wrote a series of recipes, which he desired to be instantly taken to his assistant, who would make them up from his own travelling medicine-chest. Having received his fee, he walked away lamenting, (in the usual terms,) that he had not been called in sooner, and hoping it was not yet too late; &c. &c.

Don Beltràn now became perfectly convinced, that he was in reality dangerously ill; so great is the power of grave looks and oracular sentences over the human mind. His daughter scarcely knew what to think; but endeavoured to comfort herself by the reflection, that he had, at all events, the best possible advice; while Máma Chepíta, shaking her head, prepared to obey the Doctor's injunctions, by closing the windows and substituting *sangría* for *naranjáda*. A basket full of phials soon arrived; and, before night, the cottage was perfumed with the ill-omened scent of musk.[36]

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PLANTATION.—THE SLAVES' HUTS.—THE DUENA.

When the moon shines o'er the deep,
Whisker'd Dons are fast asleep;—
Snoring, fast asleep!
From their huts the negroes run,
Full of frolic, full of fun,
Holiday to keep.

Paul and Virginia.

THE consequences of the French doctor's visit were, as Máma Chepíta had anticipated, of a highly unfavourable nature to Don Beltràn. The fever, over which the simple remedies of the negress had been nearly victorious, was reinforced, *secundum artem*, by the inundation of drugs and stimulants, which the travelling practitioner had so unsparingly poured in, and assumed a formidable character. Nature, however, ultimately triumphed over art; and the strength of the patient's constitution, assisted by such nostrums as his experienced nurse persisted in secretly administering, at length completely shook off the deadly infection. Nevertheless, his health had sustained so severe a shock, that for several weeks he was unable to leave his couch; but his daughter's attention, through the whole of his tedious illness, was most persevering. Máma Chepíta could with difficulty prevail on her to take even her necessary rest; and no representations, nor entreaties, could induce her to leave the cottage for a single moment.

The visits of Don Anselmo, which he punctually repeated every morning and evening, were a source of considerable annoyance to Maria del Rosario. As she judged it expedient to prevent him, under various pretences, from incommoding her father by his interminable political disquisitions, and querulous lamentations over the rebellious colonies, she was compelled to endure his visitations, herself, in the sitting-room; where he would smoke his cigarillos for hours together, bestowing all his tediousness on her, in uninteresting discussions, and unintelligible arguments. He construed her silence, which was the natural consequence of vexation and abstraction, into pleased attention; and flattered by so docile an auditor, he continued day after day to harangue in the same monotonous strain, on the dullest theme he could possibly have selected for the entertainment of a young female.

Don Beltràn was at length pronounced a convalescent; and the farther attendance of his medical adviser could be dispensed with. Maria del Rosario observed with alarm, that the necessary incidental expences had fearfully diminished the small stock of money, on which she and her family depended for subsistence. It was true, that Don Anselmo invariably concluded his tedious visits with offers of assistance; but these were so ambiguously expressed, as to leave it in doubt whether or not they were mere words of course. Besides, she involuntarily recoiled from the idea of owing any sort of obligation to so very disagreeable a person. She therefore determined on attempting to avail herself of the skill in embroidery and ornamental work, which she had acquired in her convent, for the purpose of supplying her father's diminished funds. She took the first opportunity, when Máma Chepíta had succeeded in enticing her to walk towards the ruined Buccaneers' fort, of mentioning her intention in a few words; and requested her hostess to inform her, what articles of needle-work would meet with the readiest sale on the island.

The negress listened with surprise to her resolution, scarcely believing it possible, that a white person could speak so composedly of work;—that bug-bear of hot climates. Perceiving, however, that her young mistress was actually in earnest, she replied with some hesitation, that she had indeed heard of emigrant ladies employing themselves in that way, but that she was totally ignorant whether they had been so successful, as to make it worth their while to continue it. The inhabitants of all classes, she said, were certainly fond of finery; but she believed that they wore nothing but European manufacture, and she hardly thought they would consider any other good enough for them. At the same time, she readily engaged to procure her young mistress, (as she constantly termed her), patterns of such articles as were most fashionable at the time; and the novice, having purchased the necessary materials, set herself in private to imitate them. This she effected so closely, and with such neatness, as to draw from her hostess exclamations of surprise and admiration. Máma Chepíta had never before believed, that any thing of the kind could be made, except in the manufactories of France or England, and, having obtained permission to exhibit for sale the first specimen that was finished, returned exultingly in a short time, having disposed of it at the house of one of the principal inhabitants where several more pieces of the same work were bespoke. This welcome success relieved Maria del Rosario, in a great measure, from her distressing apprehensions. Nevertheless, the difficult and tedious nature of the work, and the frequent interruptions she met with in prosecuting this undertaking, through her father's exceeding peevishness, and impatience of being left alone, permitted her to make but small daily progress.

A vessel was now on the point of sailing with the royalist volunteers to Cartagéna. Don Anselmo, who had considerable influence among the emigrants of his own party, as well as interest with the merchants who had fitted out the expedition, obtained a passage for Joaquin Peñuela, and gave him letters of introduction to the Spanish general, and other Europeans, on that part of the Main. His father, on bidding him farewell, divided with him the scanty remainder of his property, and exhorted him to distinguish himself by his zeal in his sovereign's cause; reminding him, that by that means alone he could now hope to obtain preferment, and an honourable independence. His departure relieved Don Beltràn from a load of anxiety, that had materially tended to retard his cure. Although he fondly doated on his son, he could not be insensible to the dangers of the society, into which he had contrived to introduce himself, since his arrival. It consisted chiefly of young emigrants, totally devoid of employment; whose sole resources against *ennui* appeared to be cards, dice, and the numerous gaming-tables which are to be found lurking in every corner of a West Indian sea-port.

Don Beltràn's convalescence now proceeded rapidly; so that he was enabled to accept his new Spanish acquaintance's reiterated invitation to visit his estate at Caõbas. On the morning appointed, two mules were in readiness at the door of Máma Chepíta's cottage, with several stout negroes, whom Don Anselmo had sent to escort his guests, and carry their baggage. They took leave of their kind hostess;—Maria del Rosario, in particular, embracing her and her daughter Martha affectionately;—and took the road leading to the plantation.

After following the course of the rivulet, for a considerable distance beyond the old Buccaneers' fort, the travellers, instead of continuing to ascend the mountain, crossed the ravine by a slight bambu bridge, which vibrated fearfully under their mules' tread. Being totally unprovided with balustrades, it could not be crossed without a sensation of imminent danger. The path then led along a stony ridge, whose dark-coloured rocks, and arid soil, were such as might be expected in the immediate neighbourhood of some volcano. Yet this apparently barren tract was shaded by tamarinds, and wild pomegranate trees; and from the dry clefts sprang various splendid species of the flowering cactus, besides geraniums, and towering aloes. Even the mules were compelled to pick their steps carefully along the beaten track, to avoid coming in contact with the prickly-pear bushes, guarded by the most formidable of all vegetable weapons, and associated, by dear-bought experience, with ideas of rattle-snakes and scorpions.

Having passed rapidly over this disagreeable part of their journey, which the sun's rays had already made oppressively sultry, the path entered a deep and gloomy ravine, shaded completely from the heat by a copse of arching bambus, over which the majestic forest trees, from which the neighbouring estate derived its name, stretched their gigantic arms. As the path descended, the murmuring of a rivulet was heard from beneath the canes. The underwood began to be thinly scattered with wild plantains, which, as the soil improved, gradually assumed the appearance of cultivation, until they mingled with, and were lost among, the domestic shrubs of the plantation.

The country opened into a small but fertile valley, through which ran a stream sufficiently large to turn a sugar-mill, that was in full work close to the principal dwelling-house. The merry song of the field negroes re-echoed in chorus from a neighbouring cane patch, in which they were busily employed cutting; and droves of mules were filing past towards the mill, laden with bundles of sugar-cane. In another direction were seen long rows of slaves, only distinguishable, at a distance, from the dark soil they were hoeing, by their short white drawers, employed weeding the tobacco crops; while the occasional clang of a whip was heard from the attendant drovers, in most cases by way of warning to the indolent workmen, but sometimes as a practical reproof to some incorrigible idler.

Lower down the valley, the travellers arrived at the negroes' habitations, thickly scattered along the high bank of the stream, out of reach of the periodical inundation to which it was subject. These huts, although built of clay, and thatched with palm-leaves, had an air of comfort about them, that might in vain be looked for among the cottages of a free-born peasantry. Each of them had a garden attached, small indeed, but amply stocked with vegetables for home consumption and sale; and the poultry of every description, including numerous broods of turkies and guinea-fowl, that swarmed around them, bore witness to the plenty enjoyed on the estate. Nearly as numerous were the little black urchins of all ages, who, in all the luxury of perfect nudity, were dabbling in the rivulet, or rolling in the dust under the plantain trees. Many of them, scarcely able to crawl, through extreme infancy and plumpness, lay sprawling about the pathway, apparently in imminent danger of being trampled under-foot by the mules; but immediately on their near approach, the urchins would scramble, as it were instinctively, under the shelter of some bush; from whence, as they peeped forth, their black eyes glared, like those of some wild animal crouching in his lair.

A short avenue, well swept and watered, led to the dwelling-house, a spacious airy building of only one story above the ground floor; being so constructed, as a necessary precaution against the consequences of earthquakes and hurricanes. These, indeed, especially the former, were far from being frequent on the island; but they were probably dreaded the more, from their making a more lasting impression, than they usually do where they are less uncommon.

Under the shady side of a broad corridor, extending round the whole building, sat Don Anselmo, with two of his friends. One of them might be easily known to be a friar; although the grey robes of the Franciscan order were thrown carelessly round him, rather after the fashion of a dressing gown, than of a monastic habit. The other was an elderly European, of a diminutive figure, but evidently possessing great vivacity, and animal spirits. He wore a white jean jacket and trowsers; a broad-brimmed straw hat, with green lining; neat yellow leather shoes; and a light blue silk handkerchief, tied loosely round a stiff shirt-collar. He was, in short, a specimen of dandyism, among the generally rough race of planters, such as the Venezuelan strangers were not prepared to expect.

This party, which had assembled in the shade, for the social purpose of enjoying their cigars and conversation together, was seated with their elbow-chairs leaning so far back against the wall, as to serve every purpose of couches. Three little negro pages were protecting them from mosquitos, with Buenos-Ayrean ostrich feather flappers; while a fourth handed round a silver tray, stored with capacious goblets of porter-cup and sangaree. The trio arose, as Don Beltràn and his daughter reached the corridor; and Don Anselmo, having welcomed his new visitors to Caõbas, presented to them, in the first place, his near neighbour and friend, Mons. Rodolfe Thermidor, a French settler on the island, who possessed a plantation, not many leagues distant.

The little planter had been embrowned and shrivelled, by a long exposure to a scorching Tropical sky, until his face might have been mistaken for that of a mulatto. He had, nevertheless, preserved unimpaired, through change of climate, and years of exile from all that deserved the name of civilised society, all that courtesy and devotion to the sex, which Frenchmen of the old *regime* were usually supposed to possess exclusively, and by prescription. He advanced, with a self-satisfied air, to pay his respects to the novice; and immediately attached himself to her, apparently secure of entertaining her, and showing his own wit and eloquence, by a series of compliments, uttered with such volubility, as to set all interruption, or attempt to answer, alike at defiance.

Don Beltràn was next introduced to the friar, by name Padre Bernardo, whose ostensible duty was that of chaplain to the plantation, and confessor to its owner and his household. But, in reality, he filled the situation of humble companion to his patron; whose pride it was his business to sooth, and whose vanity he found it his interest to flatter. While he entered into conversation with Don Beltràn, on the inexhaustible subject of the late disturbances in Venezuela, Don Anselmo despatched one of the black pages to summon the *duena de casa*, or housekeeper, Señora Jacinta. When she arrived, he recommended Maria del Rosario to her care, with directions to show the young lady the apartments that were prepared for her, and to provide her refreshments better suited to her habits, than those of which he and his companions were partaking in the corridor. Mons. Rodolfe politely handed her to the door of the entrance-hall; and expressed his hope, as he relinquished her hand, that the dinner table would be honoured by her company.

The novice felt relieved from the embarrassment natural to her youth and inexperience, by being permitted to retire with a female of the dueña's dignified mien; and examined her looks by stealth, as she walked forward in silence through the spacious rooms, which were rendered gloomy by the window shutters being closed, for the purpose of excluding the noon-day heat. She saw, with regret, that her present attendant appeared to have nothing of the motherly kindness and good humour of Máma Chepíta. Her features were expressive of pride of place, and the moroseness of habitual ill-temper; evidently soured and exasperated by the commission she had just received, and which she considered as degrading her to the level of a menial. She was a *muláta tercerόna;* and, from the few words she had uttered in answer to her master's directions, the novice knew her to be a native of the Barlovento provinces, either of Camanä or Barcelona. Her dress, which was the dark habit of Nra. Señora de Dolores; her long rosary of black soap-berries; and the formidable *disciplína*[37] which she wore twisted round her waist; proclaimed her to be a devotee of the strictest and most bigotted class.

Having conducted Maria del Rosario to a neat chamber on the first floor, opening into a viranda, which commanded a view of the mill, with the stream that supplied it, and a flower garden at the back of the house, she was about to retire; but she caught sight of the young visitor's trunk, with which a slave had followed them up stairs, and resolved to wait for a while, in hopes of obtaining a peep at its contents. For this purpose, she seated herself, unasked, at the open window, complaining of heat and fatigue; and conjecturing from the novice's youth and apparent simplicity, that there was little occasion for ceremony in addressing her, she began, without farther apology, to question her as to where she was born, and how long she had been on the island. As nothing is more common, in the cloisters of a convent, than a similar spirit of inquisitiveness, Maria del Rosario was by no means surprised or offended at meeting it in a *beáta*. She therefore readily satisfied her curiosity, by saying that she was a native of Caraccas, which city she had left only a few weeks before, for the first time in her remembrance. But when the dueña, encouraged by her affability, proceeded to enquire what had induced her father to leave his native land, and, above all, to bring with him so young and delicate a female, she found it necessary to check her impertinence, by answering, with a look of as much displeasure as she could assume, that she never permitted herself to pry into her father's motives for his actions, and that they could still less concern any one else.

Señora Jacinta found that she calculated too much on the young stranger's placid deportment; and apologised for her curiosity, which she attributed to the interest she could not help feeling for the young lady. She then offered her assistance, in changing her travelling dress for one better suited to company; informing her, that she had not much time to spare, for Don Anselmo always dined at a much earlier hour, when at Caöbas, than in the port. Maria del Rosario thanked her for her offer; but assured her, that she had always been accustomed to wait on herself. Nevertheless, as she could easily divine the motive, that must have induced so important a personage to condescend thus far, and had remarked the eager look of curiosity, which she had directed towards the trunk, even during her previous cross-examination, she good-naturedly determined to gratify her by opening it, and transferring its contents to a chest of drawers, which the dueña had pointed out for her use, on their first entering the room.

Señora Jacinta immediately forgot her pretended fatigue; and starting up, officiously busied herself in assisting to lay by every article; opening and refolding such as particularly struck her fancy, with various comments on the present degenerate taste in dress. She described the fashions of the time when she was last in Caraccas, as waiting-maid to her late mistress, at the time of her marriage with Don Anselmo:—modes that belonged to the age of slashed sleeves, and of brocades which required no stiffening save their own embroidery; and that were, according to her eloquent description, rather sublime than beautiful.

While she was thus agreeably engaged, she accidentally took up a small paper parcel, in which Maria del Rosario had carefully wrapped the professed novice's dress, that she wore in the chapel of Santa Clara on the morning of the earthquake, and in which she had been snatched from imminent peril by Carlos Sepúlveda. She had thrown it off at the suggestion of Doña Gertrùdes, on her father's declaring his intention of making her the companion of his flight; and had preserved it as a relic of the convent, and perhaps as a memorial, both of the danger from which she had been rescued, and of her preserver. The dueña unpinned the parcel, under pretence of shaking out any insects it might contain; and started with an exclamation of surprise and horror, on seeing the white serge *mortaja* and sandals, with the leather belt and scapulary of a nun.

"*Ave Maria purisima!*" she again ejaculated; "has my master admitted into his house an apostate nun!—a perjured monja! *Senora de Dolores me favorezca!* I would not for worlds sleep under the same roof with so sacrilegious a wretch. Nothing could avert an earthquake, or some similar heavenly chastisement. But we shall hear what the worthy chaplain, Padre Bernardo, says to this discovery."

Maria del Rosario could not avoid smiling at the wild look of horror, with which the sanctimonious devotee regarded her; and half resolved to leave her in ignorance of the real state of the case. But she recollected, that the talkative dueña was very capable of spreading reports on the island, which might be greatly to her disadvantage. She therefore undeceived her, by relating the accident which had unexpectedly prevented her from taking the veil; appealing to her flowing hair, as a conclusive proof that she had not in reality become a member of any religious sisterhood. Señora Jacinta shook her head incredulously; owning that, when she was on the Main, all nuns were closely shorn. But she declared it impossible to say what new rules might have been introduced, in that respect, into the convents, since the country had fallen into the hands of rebels, who contemned alike "*El Rey, ý la Fé.*" She added, that if all indeed were true that she had just heard, she could not so much blame the novice. But she expressed her sincere hope, that she would take the earliest opportunity, (as was incumbent on her,) of offering up those vows, which, she insisted, had been already mentally taken, and were therefore as conscientiously binding, as if they had been actually pronounced before the altar.

Although the novice thought very differently from her on this head, and was internally rejoiced at her escape from the cloister, she perceived it would be fruitless to argue the point with so bigotted an opponent. She therefore merely hinted, that the same awful visitation, which had interrupted the solemnization of the ceremony, had materially altered her views in life. In saying this, she referred to her father's escape from prison; but the superstitious dueña imagined, that she had alluded to the earthquake as an evil omen. As this suggestion was exactly adapted to her comprehension, it made a suitable impression on her mind. She agreed that much might be said in favour of that supposition; and it evidently tended more to reconcile her to the idea of the novice's delaying to take the veil, than the most rational arguments that could have been used. A present that Maria del Rosario made her, consisting of a shawl of vicuña's wool, from the Cordilléra, and a scapulary, embroidered and consecrated by the abbess of Santa Clara, effectually removed the prejudices she had begun to entertain against her fair countrywoman; and she curtsied out of the room, promising to send a negro girl to wait on her with refreshments.

The smoking party in the corridor, which had been interrupted by the arrival of the emigrants, had meanwhile resumed their cigars and conversation, which continued, with little intermission, until the first dinner bell summoned them to their respective chambers. When they at length assembled in the saloon, Don Anselmo insisted on seating Maria del Rosario at the head of the table, to her great confusion, for she had never been called on to preside in her father's house, since leaving the convent; and, while a recluse in the cloister, she had, of course, seen little or nothing of society. Nevertheless, she surmounted the difficulty she so much dreaded, with comparative ease; being assisted by the lively little Frenchman, who seated himself at her right hand, and paid her undivided attention until she retired.

CHAPTER XIX.

INVASION.—BATTLE.—VICTORY.

Never was horde of tyrants met
With bloodier welcome—never yet
To patriot vengeance hath the sword
More terrible libations pour'd!
The Fire-Worshippers.

The consequences of Montaverde's advance towards Caraccas were far more serious than Miranda at first anticipated. Scarcely had the express arrived at head-quarters, which Zaraza had despatched, with the first intelligence of the royalists having opened the campaign, when scattered parties of guerilléros made their appearance, in full retreat to their respective homes. They spread the report, as they passed, of their defeat on the borders of the Laguna de Maracäybo; and of their having lost their general, either killed or taken prisoner. It was impossible to stop them; for they considered their military engagements void, from the moment of losing the chief to whom they owed temporary allegiance.

As their services were never to be confidently depended on, so their defection was of trifling consequence in itself, compared to the discouragement the dangerous example seemed likely to spread through the army. The discontented among the troops,—and they were numerous,—seized this opportunity to raise a clamour, for the payment of all arrears due to the army; and endeavoured under this pretence, to excite their comrades to mutiny. The prompt and vigilant line of conduct adopted by Miranda, for the purpose of quelling the slightest appearance of insubordination, was barely sufficient to maintain a salutary dread of his authority; and it became evident to him, that the soldiers' spirits were depressed, and little to be relied on, if he persisted in his original design of remaining on the defensive. He had also received private intelligence of deputations having been sent from the nearest frontier towns to the enemy, offering to treat with Monteverde on separate terms; and he plainly saw, that vigorous measures alone could save the republic from falling asunder, and from consequent ruin. He therefore took leave of the Junta, who previous to his departure created him Dictator, with the most ample authority belonging to that important situation; and placing himself at the head of the army, advanced to meet Monteverde, and, if possible, to check his farther progress.

By the intelligence he continued to receive from his aide-de-camp, Carlos Sepúlveda, who had received instructions to watch the advance of the invading army, he was led to conclude, that the Spanish general designed to force his way over the small branch of the Cordillēra, which forms the Western boundary of Venezuela. Under this impression, he pushed his army rapidly through the vallies of Vitória and Maracaÿ, and established himself at the formidable pass of the Tambo del Condor. From hence, the patriots had an uninterrupted view of the great lake, and of the open country on its eastern banks; along which were scattered the white tents of the royalists, in a chain of encampments, extending far to the right and left of Miranda's position. At a small hamlet, half way down the mountain, was Sepúlveda's picket of carbineers. Their tricoloured standard, waved aloft in sign of welcome, could plainly be distinguished; for it was burnished by the last rays of the declining sun, while the Spanish camp, still lower down, was already wrapped in gloom.

Miranda, attended by his staff, rode down to visit the advanced picket; and was informed by Sepúlveda, that the royalists had as yet made no demonstration of their intentions, as to the point by which they designed to pass this mountain barrier. He had however been informed by an Indian, on whose fidelity he could rely, that numerous convoys of baggage and ammunition had passed, by night, towards the left of the Spanish line. This gave grounds for suspicion, that Monteverde's secret determination was to advance by the sea coast, for the purpose of attacking Puerto Cavallo. Nevertheless, the circuitous nature of this route, and the well-known difficulties attending any deviation from the ordinary track,—impediments which the timid and jealous policy of the Spaniards had forbidden to be removed,—appeared to Miranda conclusive arguments against the probability of this suggestion. He was still farther confirmed in his previous belief, by the unanimous declaration of the guides belonging to the army; who united in asserting, that the Tambo del Condor was the only practicable pass for troops.

The next morning, however, a messenger arrived at the patriot bivouac before day break, to apprize Miranda, that Sepúlveda's patroles had discovered the enemy to have decamped silently during the night. The mountain mists as yet prevented the commander-in-chief from reconnoitring, or detaching any portion of the army in pursuit; neither was it yet by any means certain, what direction the royalists had taken. But, when the fog had risen from the valley, it was ascertained, by the stragglers seen at a distance following the line of march, and by the united testimony of the payzanos, who had assembled through curiosity on the site of the abandoned camp, that Monteverde had marched rapidly to the Northward.

While Miranda was deliberating, in a council of war, whether it were most expedient to follow the route of the royalists, or to fall back on the vallies that had been left defenceless, Lorenzo Tovàr presented himself at the general's tent with intelligence. He stated that the Cazique Pichiloncõy, who had brought him a present of fish from the lake, had declared to him, that he well knew the mountain road, by which Monteverde would probably enter the vallies of the Caraccas.

The Indian was immediately sent for, and repeated his assertion before the council; stating that he had long been acquainted with the Quebràda del Culegüi, and that it was also well known to the Guagívi tribe, as a short but rugged pass leading into the low country of Venezuela. He said that the above tribe, with which his people were at war, had certainly betrayed this road to the Spaniards; for he had seen one of their number, in company with Monteverde and his staff, ride by a bush in which he lay concealed, the day after the enemy crossed the river Catacumba; and had watched them until they took the direction leading to the pass. He also said that, considering the early hour of the night, at which the enemy had decamped, they must certainly have reached the quebráda by day-light, and probably their main body had already crossed the mountains. This intelligence decided the question at issue in the council; and Miranda gave orders for a rapid retreat towards the valley of Maracay.

Monteverde, meanwhile, who had purposely continued encamped near the lagoon, until he had drawn the attention of his less experienced adversary from his real plans of attack, reaped the fruit of his stratagem, in an unimpeded entrance into the low country. Here his army was reinforced by numerous partizans, whom discontent or superstition induced to rally round the Spanish standard; and his cause was daily strengthened, by the declamations of the friars in the neighbouring towns, who exhorted the people everywhere to flock to the cause of their lawful sovereign Fernando. The most conspicuous and enthusiastic among them, was the Capuchin Fray Pablo, who had been appointed one of the chaplains to the army, in consideration of his services and sufferings, and who affected the tone of a martyr to his principles. This turbulent monk eagerly seized every opportunity that offered, of invoking vengeance on the sacrilegious traitors, who had rebelled against their king, and had insulted the catholic faith in the person of its minister. After a succession of forced marches, the patriots found themselves, at an early hour of the morning, in the presence of their opponents; who were marching in a parallel direction, and had entered the same valley by a different road. The generals on both sides issued orders for the immediate formation of the line of battle; being well aware, that it was impossible, from the relative positions in which they had been so suddenly placed, to avoid coming to a decisive action, even if they had been desirous of postponing it. Little previous exhortation was necessary to animate the troops. The royalists were inspired with the confidence natural to an advancing army, augmented by a sense of superiority in numbers and discipline over their opponents, whom they despised and hated; while enthusiasm, and confidence in their leader,—sentiments which gained additional strength from the excitement of the impending fight,—amply atoned for the deficiencies in numerical force, and inexperience in war, of which the patriots could not but be conscious.

A short time was spent in arranging the opposite armies, on each side of a small brook that wound through the centre of the valley, and in manœuvring for the possession of certain important positions:—operations which could not have failed to interest a mere spectator, by the beautiful display of military skill and precision, in the various complicated movements, executed chiefly to the sound of the bugle. The action was commenced by a brigade of field-pieces, on a small eminence behind the left of the Spanish line. Very few shots took effect, by reason of the usual mistake made by Spanish artillery, of opening their fire when at too great a distance. Nevertheless, it mainly contributed to render the raw patriot recruits unsteady; and compelled Miranda to advance to the attack that part of his line which was cannonaded. Before it had reached the rivulet, the French volunteer artillery-men, who had been detained in the rear by the bad roads, came up. Having calculated their distance more scientifically, they returned the fire, with interest, and with a far superior aim, on the Spanish line.

Monteverde, who had designed to act on the defensive as long as possible, was highly pleased to find that his opponents had left their position, for the purpose of commencing the engagement. He permitted the centre regiments, which Miranda had ordered to the front, to descend into the bed of the rivulet without opposition. But then, while their columns were unavoidably broken by the winding banks, which prevented them from readily forming, or acting in unison, he charged them with the reinforcement that had lately arrived from Cadiz. These moustachio'd veterans advanced, with their usual war-cry of "*Santiago por Espana!*" and drove those patriots who had gained the land, back again into the stream, which was nearly breast high in that part. Flushed with their advantage, they plunged in after the fugitives, and pursued them to the opposite side, encouraged by the Spanish officers; for they, unacquainted with the habits of the creoles, erroneously supposed, that troops which were so easily broken could not be rallied with equal facility.

They soon discovered the fatal error, into which their overweening confidence had led them. The Venesuelans, who fought barefoot, or at most with light sandals, and unincumbered by knapsacks, waded the rivulet with ease, and ran back to the position they had left, where they were rallied without the least difficulty. The Spaniards, on the contrary, heavily armed, and accoutred with all the paraphernalia of regular troops, were considerably impeded in their passage; and, when they had ascended the bank, could advance but slowly to the attack, with shoes and gaiters soaked with water. The patriots were encouraged, by their evident embarrassment, to charge them in turn. They could make but little impression on veterans, long accustomed, during the Peninsular war, to conflicts on a more extensive scale; but they succeeded in checking their progress, and in convincing them that victory was not so easily gained, as they had anticipated, over troops however inexperienced, who fought for liberty and their native land.

Meanwhile, the Cazadores de Aragoa and the Grenaderos del Barlovento, who were stationed on the right of the patriot line, had crossed the stream lower down, under cover of the French volunteers' fire, and had carried the height which had been crowned by the Spanish field-pieces, three of which fell into their hands. Miranda immediately ordered the carbineers to cross the rivulet, and support the infantry; sending with them, *en ancas*, a body of Frenchmen, to work the guns which had been captured. The left flank of the royalists having been thus turned, Monteverde found it necessary to recall the Spaniards who had crossed the brook, and to make a final desperate effort to dislodge the patriots from the position they had just gained. But the veteran Europeans had scarcely approached within range of the artillery, when a galling fire was opened on them, which was perceived, as often as the smoke rolled away, to make considerable gaps in their columns. They advanced, nevertheless, with the coollest intrepidity, their track being marked distinctly by the killed and wounded left behind them; until they reached a level maiz field, just beneath the mountain on which the guns stood.

Here they halted, and were in the act of deploying, preparatory to ascending the heights, when the patriot regiment of carbineers, that had been just joined by a corps of lancers, galloped round from behind the hillocks by which they had been concealed, and charged the Spaniards before they had time to form square. The consequences were most disastrous, as will readily be conceived. A few royalists succeeded in gaining the bed of the rivulet, and the broken ground that they had incautiously left; but far the greater part fell victims to the fatal *guerra á la muerte*, which their own countrymen had in an evil hour introduced, and which was long carried on with unrelenting fury by both parties. In vain did they form small platoons; and, setting back to back, fight manfully for their lives. Lance thrust and sabre cut were showered on them unsparingly, and without intermission, by the overwhelming force of the patriot cavalry; and, in a few minutes, the mournful cry of "*Quartel, por Dios!*" which had been raised, in the agony of despair, by a few panic-struck individuals, who found themselves the last survivors of their band, was silenced for ever.

Monteverde was in most instances notoriously prodigal of human life, which he was ever ready to sacrifice, where there was the most remote chance of success; but here he saw clearly, that it would be useless to protract the struggle. He therefore rapidly retired to the heights overlooking the valley; not however before a considerable number of his men had been surrounded, and taken prisoners by the cavalry, who had for once been satiated with slaughter, and were prevailed on by Miranda to give quarter. The patriot general then reconnoitred the fresh position occupied by the royalists, and saw sufficient cause to apprehend, that any attempt to dislodge them, must inevitably cost him a number of his best troops, disproportionate to any advantage he could possibly reap by success. He therefore considered it expedient to bivouac on the field, without harassing his troops by any farther exertion; fatigued as they were by marching and fighting, with scarcely any rest or refreshment for several days. As it was still early, he sent off the prisoners, guarded by the carbineers, who were the most trustworthy corps in the army, to Puerto Cavallo ; with particular instructions to the governor, Simòn Bolívar, to be vigilant in his precautions against surprise by sea and land.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CASTLE.—DESERTERS.—THE CHINGANERA.—THE CHICHERIA.

Then to the castle's lowest ward
  Sped forty yeomen tall;
The iron-studded gates unbarr'd,
Raised the portcullis' pond'rous guard,
The lofty palisades unsparr'd,
  And let the draw-bridge fall.

Marmion.

Sepulveda was once more detached from his duty as aid-de-camp, to command the escort appointed to conduct the prisoners. During the early days of the revolution, treachery and breach of faith were notoriously of such frequent occurrence among men of all ranks, that it was considered a measure of common precaution, by no means unusual or invidious, to supersede any officer in an important command, by another whose patriotism was more thoroughly approved; and to reinstate the former, without any explanation being required or offered. A verbal order was sometimes sufficient for this *cambalacho;* but it was more usually notified in general orders, that "Don Fuláno de

Tal, Edecan, &c., would take temporary command of such a corps during the performance of some specified duty; *en lugar de* Don Perenzejo de Tal, who would join the staff in the interim."

As Sepúlveda was well aware of the unsettled state of the province, consequent on the incursion of the royalists, and the inflammatory harangues of the friars, he took especial care to march his escort with every precaution usually observed in passing through an enemy's country. About half a league to the Southward of Puerto Cavallo, he was met by a patrole from the castle at the port, and warned that it would be dangerous for him to attempt entering the city. He learned, that the inhabitants had risen, the preceding day, against the troops composing the garrison, whom they had compelled to retire into the forts at the harbour; and that the Spanish flag had been hoisted in the city and suburbs. The subaltern, in command of the patrole, furnished Sepúlveda with one of his men, to conduct him by a circuitous route to the port; and, as the escort proceeded, Don Carlos questioned the guide concerning the cause of the insurrection.

He was informed that, immediately on the arrival of the news of Monteverde's having succeeded in crossing the mountains, his partisans, who were numerous in the city, had openly declared themselves in his favour. This had rendered it necessary for Don Simòn Bolívar, the governor, to make some serious examples of the most audacious among them; but his decisive measures had drawn on him the indignation of the friars, who had not scrupled to recommend in their sermons to the people, that the "*verdúgo dezcarádo*" should be cut off from among them. Bolívar had consequently been warned, by many of the most distinguished inhabitants, against risking himself in the streets without a guard; but to no effect. The day before Sepúlveda's arrival, as Bolivar was passing through the Plaza, in company with his fort-adjutant, Rivas, he was publicly pointed out as an arch-rebel and malignant heretic, by a friar who was haranguing the populace.

Irritated at this affront, Bolívar rode up to the insolent monk, and struck him several *planazos* over the shoulders, with the flat of his sabre; ordering him at the same time, at his peril, to retire to his convent. The mob instantly took fire at the outcries of the fanatic, who pretended to be severely wounded. They assaulted the governor and his companion so vigorously, with stones and knives, that they killed the adjutant on the spot, and compelled Bolívar to consult his safety by flight. The populace, emboldened by their success, and probably apprehending chastisement from the garrison in the forts, armed and organised themselves, and sent a deputation to Monteverde, inviting him to occupy the city with the troops. They had as yet showed no signs of an intention to attack the castle; nor had they attempted to impede its intercourse with the surrounding country. But they had shut the city gates, and posted regular pickets at all the outlets of the suburbs; with the avowed intention of holding Puerto Cavallo for Monteverde, until he should send them succours.

As Sepúlveda approached the port with his escort, he found every part of the fortifications in a state of preparation for defence; as if hourly expecting an attack. The drawbridges were up; a lighted match smoked by the side of every gun; and the bayonets of sentries glittered from every part of the ramparts, where the *bandéra tricolòr* waved defiance to the neighbouring city. When he reached the castle ditch, he rode forward in advance of his party along the causeway, which projected into a narrow inlet of the sea, flowing round that part of the forts, and waved the standard of the carbineers. He was answered from the wall, above the sally-port; and in a few minutes the drawbridge was lowered, the heavy iron-studded gates were thrown open, and a strong guard of infantry marched out, and formed on the glacis. Sepúlveda then beckoned to his lieutenant to advance; and the prisoners filed forward towards the castle, followed by the cavalry escort. The garrison guard brought up the rear; the draw-bridge was again drawn up; and the gates closed with the usual ceremony.

An adjutant appeared to receive Sepúlveda, and signified to him the governor's orders, that the prisoners should form on the parade for his inspection. The carbineers having dismounted, as their attendance was no longer necessary, Don Carlos ranged the Spanish captives in double file along two sides of the square. There they stood, with downcast looks, travel-stained, and some among them slightly wounded, exposed to the curious gaze, and whispered remarks, of all the idlers belonging to the garrison. The officers, in particular, crowded round Sepúlveda, to enquire the news; and he was proceeding to satisfy their curiosity, when the appearance of Bolívar silenced all conversation for the present.

He advanced with hurried steps into the centre of the parade; and enquired for the officer commanding the escort which had just arrived. Sepúlveda presented himself with the usual salute, which was slightly answered; and Bolívar proceeded to ask him several questions, in rapid succession, relative to the late action; repeatedly interrupting his details, by exclamations of impatience at not having been present. He then turned to the prisoners, and walked slowly along their ranks, regarding each individual with a scrutinizing glance; under which few, even of the sullen hard-featured Gallégos, could avoid quailing. He paused before a creole, who stood among them in the uniform of a Spanish grenadier; and having examined him attentively, said, " '*Norabuena, camarada!* have you forgotten me?"

The soldier whom he addressed, faultered an attempt to reply, and remained silent.

" Your memory appears to have failed you, amigo!" continued Bolívar; " let me remind you, that you served in my regiment on the last expedition to Coro, where we lost you; and you have never been able, it seems, to find your way back to your colours. Stand out from the ranks?"

He recognised, in like manner, eight or ten more deserters; and separated them from their companions, whom he ordered to be confined in the casas-matas. He then directed the adjutant to take a few files of men from the Guardia de Prevencion, and to shoot the deserters instantly on the North bastion, at a corner known by the name of "*el rincon de las aves-marias,*" from its beingthe usual scene of executions. The unfortunate men, on hearing this sudden sentence, turned pale; but made no sort of attempt to obtain pardon. The adjutant lingered, as if unwilling to execute the order he had received; and ventured to enquire, whether a confessor should be summoned.

"*Quatro balas á cada uno!*" vociferated Bolívar, with the terrific frown,[38] peculiar to him; "*Cuerpo de Dios!* I will have no monks introduced into these castles. They have already done more mischief, both at Caraccas and Puerto Cavallo, than the shaven crowns of their whole meddling fraternity are worth. If the deserters have a fancy for confession, let it be to each other, on their way to the bastion: but at your peril be it, Señor Ayuadante Corbalàn, if I do not hear the musketry at work within ten minutes. *Cuidádo!*"

As Corbalàn retired with the deserters to the Guardia de Prevencion, on the opposite side of the parade, Bolívar followed him with a keen searching glance, and said in a low voice, scarcely audible even by these nearest him,—"*Perro atrevído!* twice already has he presumed to interfere with his advice, since I have made him fort-adjutant. To plead for Godos and deserters! Let him look to his own head. Poor Rivas!—I should have given him this commission to execute, had it not been for that mutinous canalla in the city yesterday.—I had confidence in Rivas. No *pendejadas,* about friars and confession, with him: but I hardly know what to think of this Corbalàn. Let him look to himself!"

He then turned to Sepúlveda, and directed him to quarter his carbineers in the cavalry barracks, at the port, for the night; as there was no forage in the castle for the horses, and little water to spare, there being but one tank for the supply of the garrison. He at the same time expressed a wish to see him at supper in the fort, when he had seen his men comfortably established; that he might enquire, more at his leisure, into the circumstances of the late victory. Don Carlos expressed his thanks, and ordering his carbineers to mount, left the castle with them, by a different gate from that by which he had entered; and descended by a steep narrow path immediately into the port. The streets through which he passed were silent and deserted; and, as the sound of the horses' hoofs was heard clattering along the paved streets, the doors and windows of the principal houses were hastily closed. As the uniform and standard of the carbineers were recognised, groups of females, still trembling with apprehension, crowded round the soldiers, to enquire the fate of their friends, and to learn when the enemy might be expected.

Having marched his men into the barrack, and given his lieutenant the necessary instructions, Sepúlveda strolled out to the harbour, which he found nearly empty, although usually much frequented by merchant vessels of all sizes. The few which still remained were lying with sails bent, evidently in readiness to go to sea on the first alarm; and several small droguers and lighters were lying close to the quay, hastily embarking merchandise of various descriptions, with which it was piled. Merchants and their clerks were hurrying from their respective store-houses, followed by strings of peons, bending under the weight of bales and cases, which they were hastening to ship. A Venesuelan man-of-war schooner was lying at some distance, with her fore top-sail loose, and her signal for sailing flying at the main; and several gun-boats were mooring in a line in front of the mole, so as to command the mouth of the harbour.

Sepúlveda walked slowly along the sands, yet moist with the ebbing tide, until he reached the rocky promontory on which the castle stands. Here he seated himself to rest after his fatiguing march, enjoying the cool evening breeze, and the novel sight of the dark blue ocean outside the harbour. His thoughts insensibly turned to the theme on which they were wont to dwell, during the few short intervals of tranquillity he was fated to enjoy. He was wearying his mind in fruitless conjectures, whither Don Beltràn and his daughter had wandered; when he heard a light step by his side, turned, and saw the Chinganera, muffled in her dark woollen manta.

"Well met, Carlos Sepulveda!" exclaimed she, before he could address her; "I come to fulfil the promise I made when we last parted; and where could I find a fitter place than this? That small black schooner, close under the guns of the castle, is the very one that conveyed Maria del Rosario Peñuela from her native land."

"Then you have learned whither she is gone?" cried Don Carlos, with joyful surprise; "tell me instantly the place."

"I know it not, hermano! but you shall soon know; that is if you can prevail on the Dutchman who commands the vessel to tell you. His mildest replies to me, when I asked him the question, were '*bruga*,' and '*perra montonéra*.' But follow me, and I will show you the bodegon he frequents."

She led the way, followed by Sepúlveda, along the beach, until they reached the quay. She there turned up a narrow lane, lined by watermen's and peons' cottages, before whose doors their wives were busied cooking fish for their evening repast. At the upper end of this lane, where it was crossed by an alley leading to the main street, she pointed out a corner house, which was denoted to be a *chicheria*, by the usual legend, in large ill-formed letters over the door, of

"VENDITO, ALAVADO, Y ENZALZADO, &c."

and by a grotesque sign, painted in ochre and indigo on the white-washed wall, said to represent a bull-fight. On a long bench outside the door, formed by a broken canoe with its bottom upwards, sat several sailors and peons, smoking, and drinking wine and chicha out of red lacquered calabashes, while the large room within resounded to the strains of a harp, accompanied by two or three vihuelas and Indian rattles, and by the shrill recitative of the hired singers.

The Chinganéra having directed Sepúlveda to enquire for Lodewyk Sluiker, he made his way, with difficulty, through the press, to the Señora pulpéra, a comely zambita, whose massive gold earrings, and rosary with *Padres* and *Credos* of the same precious metal, shewed her profession to be tolerably lucrative. She was so earnestly engaged in dispensing chicha de piña [39] and aguardiente, and in performing her duty as taster to each of her numerous guests, that she scarcely gave herself the trouble to attend to the question that was asked her. On seeing indistinctly Sepúlvedas moustachios and capote, through the dense medium formed by the smoke of at least a hundred cigars and churumbélas, she exclaimed in a flippant tone, "There are none of your soldiers here, Señor Militar! you may believe me, *so' palabra de ventéra!*" adding, in an under voice, meant only for those nearest her, "*Pobrecítos!* their pay-day comes too seldom for them to see the inside of a chichería often."

The revellers, standing round the musicians, turned to offer to the stranger, to whom the hostess had drawn their attention, a share of their several potations; but all made way for him in respectful silence, on seeing beneath his military cloak the light blue sash of an aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief. A whisper soon spread through the crowded room, of "Edecan del Gefe Supremo!" and reached the alarmed landlady's ears. She hastened to apologize for having mistaken "*Os Merced*" for a soldier; declaring that she had supposed him to be a sergeant from the castle, in search of men belonging to the garrison.

"But Os Merced has undoubtedly called to taste my chicha de piña, which, without boasting, is allowed to be the best in the port; and well it may,—made of the finest red pine-apples from Aragoa. If Os Merced will please to walk into the aposento, he will find Alferez Chispan, Cadete Naypes, and Abanderado Tragon, with several other Señores Militares, who honour my chichería with a visit every evening after siesta."

Sepúlveda begged permission to defer, until another opportunity, his introduction to the worthies who were employing their leisure hours so agreeably; and enquired for the master of the Curazao droguer.

"*Malhaya la suerte!* a messenger from the castle has just fetched him away to the governor, to receive his dispatches for La Guayra. He will sail to-morrow with the forenoon tide and sea breeze; but if Os Merced will wait a while,—"

"It is of little consequence, patroncíta! I shall probably meet him at the castle; if not, I will call in the morning. *Hasta entonces!*"

He left the chichería, cheered as he went by the revellers, with shouts of "Viva Miranda!" and communicated to the Chinganéra the result of his enquiry. He then stated the necessity there was for his immediately waiting on Bolívar; and expressed a wish to meet her the following morning in the same place.

"One thing more," she replied, "I have to say, before we part, perhaps for ever. I warned you on the Alaméda of Caraccas, that, when we next met, you would be in danger of shortly becoming a wanderer from Coquibacóa. Beware of sleeping in yonder castle. When did a fort long wear the same flag that a neighbouring city had torn down? It will be known, before long, that there are foes within, as well as without the ramparts. I counted the royalist prisoners who arrived this day; and they are more in number than the soldiers of the garrison. Beware, lest they win their way out of the casas-matas with silver keys!"

She turned, and hastened down the lane with her usual celerity; leaving Sepúlveda in doubt, whether to pity what he believed to be the ravings of a distempered imagination, or to laugh at the oracular tone affected by all of her tribe, when they wish to excite interest and attention in their hearers.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE ADJUTANT.—BOLIVAR.—TREACHERY.—ESCAPE.

Montano. "To the platform, masters; come, let's set the
watch.
Iago. "Away, I say! go out, and cry—a mutiny!
"Nay, good Lieutenant,—alas, gentlemen.—
"Help, masters!—Here's a goodly watch, indeed!
"The town will rise!"

Othello.

The evening gun was already fired, and answered by musketry from the schooner in the harbour, as Sepúlveda reached the castle. Nevertheless, the land-port gate was fortunately still open; and, as Don Carlos passed under the arched gateway leading under the ramparts, he enquired of the officer on guard, whether a foreign sailor had entered.

"He has been with Bolívar this last half hour;" was the answer; "and the fort-adjutant has just brought an order to keep the bridge down until his return. It has happened luckily for you, camarada! for otherwise you would have found the gates closed for the night, and must have sought lodgings in the port;—not to mention the serious loss of a good supper at the governor's table."

As Don Carlos passed through the narrow covered-way, into which the casas-matas open, he met the adjutant, followed by several men whom, notwithstanding the gloom of the vaulted passage, he recognized as the deserters, whom Bolívar had detected among the prisoners, and had ordered for instant execution. Corbalàn started back on seeing him; but immediately recovering himself, ushered the men into one of the cells, which he opened with a master-key. Having locked them in, he turned to Sepúlveda with a forced smile, saying, "I am rejoiced to see that you are at last arrived, Señor Edecan. I feared you would have delayed so long at the port, that we should have been deprived of the pleasure of your company at Don Simòn's."

Sepúlveda made a suitable reply; and turned the conversation on the deserters whom he had just seen. He expressed his surprize at Bolívar's having consented to pardon them, contrary to his repeated declaration; and complimented the adjutant on his extraordinary success, in persuading a chief so remarkable for pertinacity in all his resolves. Corbalàn appeared more and more embarrassed; and at length confessed, that he had spared the men's lives without the governor's knowledge.

"To own the truth," said he, "I contrived it with the assistance of the sergeant commanding the shooting party; whom I bribed to load his men's muskets with blank cartridges. I gave the prisoners a hint to fall flat, as if killed, on hearing the volley; and the picket was marched off without suspecting anything extraordinary. But let me entreat you will say nothing whatever of my stratagem in the garrison; for, if it should come to Bolívar's knowledge, I might chance to suffer severely for my humanity."

Sepúlveda promised to keep the secret, as he was requested; although he could not but entertain a very indifferent opinion of an officer, in so confidential a situation as that of an adjutant, who could degrade himself so far, as to tamper with his subalterns in the discharge of his and their duty. He made no remark, however, but enquired how Corbalàn proposed to conceal this neglect of the governor's sentence; observing that, in all probability, suspicion would be excited by the night patroles not finding the bodies, on going their usual rounds along the ramparts.

"*No le háce!*" rejoined the adjutant; "the North bastion is built on the rock overhanging the harbour; and I intend to say, (should any enquiry be made,) that I ordered the bodies to be thrown into the sea at high water; as used to be the custom formerly, when the Spaniards were in possession of the castle."

They reached the governor's house, just as Lodewyk Sluiker was leaving it. Sepúlveda endeavoured to question him, but the schipper would not hear a word; exclaiming, as he broke away,—

Slapperloot! 't burg-poorten will be closed, and ik zal niet in myn schooner slaap. Come to myn wyn-huis 't morgen, in 't Pasadizo del Muelle,—you zal know it by 't zign of 't *bullen-gevecht*,—and we zal talk zo long as you zall choose."

The adjutant left Sepúlveda in the entrance hall, while he carried in the evening reports to the governor; and immediately returning, ushered Don Carlos in, whispering a repetition of his earnest request, that he would be careful not to allude to the deserters. He found Bolívar pacing up and down a drawing-room, commanding a view of the harbour, in animated conversation with several officers of the garrison; and occasionally referring to a map of Venezuela, drawn by himself from his own surveys, which was spread on a side table. On seeing Sepúlveda, he welcomed him cordially, and taking his arm, continued his usual rapid walk; listening with interested attention to the details of the recent opening of the campaign.

On hearing him mention the Quebráda del Culegüi, as the pass by which Monteverde entered the low country, and which Don Carlos assured him that the guides had declared not to exist, Bolívar turned to his map, and exultingly pointed to the spot; saying, between jest and earnest, "At some future period, when I succeed to the office of commander-in-chief, I will shew the Godos, that there is not an inch of my native land, with which I am not as well acquainted, as with my own plantation of San Miguel. Little did the Captain-General of Caraccas think, when he employed me as engineer to survey the country, that even then, mere youth as I was, I dreamed of nothing but the independence of Venezuela. Hoping that a correct map might be one day useful, in the event of a struggle for our rights and liberty, (which was then indeed a most visionary expectation,) I took this copy, by stealth, and in spite of every precaution and sanguinary threat of the jealous despot who commanded us."

He folded it up, and deposited it carefully in the breast of his uniform; laughing as he continued; "It has ever since been my bosom friend; and was, in one instance, the means of saving me from a severe and probably dangerous wound. During a smart skirmish, one day, in the province of Coro, its thick folds warded off a musket ball, which would otherwise have penetrated pretty deep, and in an awkward direction."

Supper was announced by a gray-headed soldier, who acted as butler to the governor, and was well known throughout the patriot army, for the unwearied fidelity with which he attended him, although of a very advanced age, through those arduous campaigns, which proved too severe for many a more youthful follower. He had been a confidential servant in the family of Bolívar's father, on whose death he had attached himself to Don Simòn; and was clad, at his own request, in uniform, which, as he conceived, gave him a right to fight in the patriot ranks, near his old master's son. He was, at the same time, rather pertinacious in offering his opinion on politics; and, although he firmly believed his young colonel to be the best and bravest man in Venezuela, and respected him accordingly, his affection too frequently led him to indulge in greater familiarity, than Bolívar would have endured from any other human being.

When Bolívar had taken his seat at the table, surrounded by the staff of the garrison, and other brother officers, his guests, few could have recognised, in the affable and highly polished host, the stern unbending disciplinarian of the field and parade. There he affected a roughness totally foreign to his domestic habits, and enforced peremptory obedience by a torrent of coarse expletives, adapted to the comprehension of the rude undisciplined insurgents, whom he most frequently had to deal with. In his own house, or elsewhere at times when duty did not interfere, his conversation was highly pleasing and instructive; and no one could be better acquainted with the art of making his guests pleased, at one and the same time, with themselves and him.

After supper, he encouraged a brisk circulation of the bottle; for although Bolivar was in general remarkably abstemious, he was far from being rigid in enforcing temperance at his own table. From thence cigars alone were banished, as (strange to say of a creole and a soldier) he had an unconquerable dislike to the smell of tobacco. The guests, with the exception of Corbalàn, who sat silent, and evidently in deep meditation, soon caught the lively tone of hilarity which animated their host; and the sound of the *retréta*, commencing under the governor's balcony, and slowly going its usual rounds through the castle, reminded them for the first time that it was getting late. The fort-adjutant immediately started up, and retired to collect the reports of guard and roll-call; taking with him the heavy bunch of keys, with which it was his duty to inspect the different posterns and case-mates. The other officers were preparing to follow his example; but were detained by Bolívar, who insisted on their sitting still until the return of Corbalân.

"When Rivas had charge of the keys," said he, "I used to trust entirely to him, and retire to rest, as usual, with the retréta; but I must see more of this new adjutant, before I can repose so much confidence in him. Besides, we are not every day so fortunate as to receive an aid-de-camp from head-quarters, bringing good news, and some hundred prisoners. We must send back Don Carlos to-morrow, with a favorable report of the hospitality of our little garrison, to our friends in the army."

Thus encouraged, the company resumed their gaiety. Time was again passing unheeded in social merriment, when the old butler slowly opened the door; and having paused a moment, as if to ascertain who were present, advanced to the back of the governor's chair, where he stood until his master was at leisure to attend to him.

"Well, Tahita Felipe!" said Bolívar at length; "have my unusually late hours scandalised you? Or are you come to tell me, that I must have no more wine, as you took the liberty of assuring me not very long since?"

"No, hïjo Simòn!" said the old man; "but do you recollect how long the adjutant has been absent?

And do you remember that he has the keys with him?"

"Very true, Tahita! he has certainly been rather dilatory; but he is new in office, and consequently awkward at first."

"Take care that he is not too clever for you, hĭjo! said Felipe; and added in a significant under tone, "He is a Porteño of Cartagéna."

"And what though he be, *viejo tonton?* are you so thorough-bred a mountaineer as to distrust all Porteños, on the authority of the silly old song?" I thought there had been more sense and less prejudice under those gray locks, amigo Felipe! But tell me, once for all, what it is you suspect."

"It is my belief, hĭjo Simòn,—as well as that of others in the garrison, who are afraid to speak out,—that 'ñor Corbalàn is little better than a Godo in disguise, and by no means to be depended on in a castle so near the enemy as this is. Recollect how he interested himself to-day for the deserters;—as I heard more than one remark;—and for no other reason whatever, than because they were taken in arms for the king."

"*Hua! viegito;*— you are so much accustomed to the manners of your late favorite, poor Rivas, (who I must own was far more likely to mistake in shooting too many than too few Godos,) that you fancy every one to be of their party, who is inclined to spare them. You forget that I myself used at one time to intercede with General del Toro for them; although few families in Venezuela have more ample cause to execrate them than mine. Go down stairs, and tell my ordenanza to search for the adjutant; and to desire him to make haste with the reports."

When Felipe retired, Bolívar remained thoughtful for a short time; as if his old servant's observations had made some impression on his mind. Sepúlveda recollected the circumstance of the deserters, whom Corbalàn had rescued in so clandestine a manner, from the fate they had merited. He was debating within himself, whether he ought to consider himself bound by a promise of secrecy so imprudently given, when a shot was heard in the corner of the parade, followed by a volley of musketry, and the well-known ominous shouts of "Viva el Rey!—" Mueran los insurgentes!"

"*Cien mil demonios!*" exclaimed Bolívar, as he started to his feet, and buckled on his sabre; "Felipe was right, after all; and I am a confiding ideot!"

All rushed into the adjoining room; from whence they could see the parade beneath, crowded with troops in the Spanish uniform, mingled with a disorderly mob of rotózos bearing clubs, long knives, and torches,who were rushing towards the Government-house. The sergeant's guard, which was stationed at the door, fired among them as they advanced, and instantly retreated into the porch, shutting the gate after them. But a tumultuous attack was made on it with stones and bludgeons; the mob outside being only hindered from forcing their passage, by the impediments their own eagerness and numbers threw in their way. Bolívar comprehended at the first glance the state of the case.

"That traitor Corbalàn," said he, "has released the Spanish prisoners, surprised the main-guard, and thrown open the gates to the rotózos from the city. Follow me close, camaradas! If we fall into their hands,—*se acabò la fiesta!*"

So saying, he hurried back into the supper-room; and threw open the folding doors leading to the viranda which overlooked the harbour. He then unbound his sash, and having fastened it to the railing of the balcony, set the example of descending, which was speedily followed by his guests and domestics, among whom was old Felipe. Bolívar led the way to the North bastion, which he and his party reached unobserved. Pausing there, he prepared for taking to the water, by unbuckling his sabre, and fastening it to his back.

"*Ahora bien, camaradas!*" said he, "let all those who can swim follow me to that little schooner you can just discern, about a pistol-shot off. Luckily for us, it is high tide; and there will be depth enough of water, close under the rocks, for us to drop into without danger."

All the officers, and most of the soldiers, who heard him, prepared to take his advice: but old Felipe shook his head, and said, "I was born in the Cerranía, and never could swim, even when a boy; so that I should run but a poor chance, were I to trust myself out of my depth at my age. Shift for yourself, hijo Simòn, and never heed me. The Godos will hardly ill-treat so old a man as I am; and if they should, I shall have lived too long if I must see the Spanish flag flying in the place of the tricolor. *Dios os guarde, hijo!*"

As he advanced to embrace his master, Bolívar suddenly seized the old man in his arms, and plunged him into the water from the rock on which he was standing. Then dashing in after him, he caught him before he could sink, and supported him with one arm, swimming actively with the other towards Lodewyk Sluiker's schooner. Lights now began to appear on board several vessels, which had been alarmed by the firing and clamour in the castle. The honest Curazao-man, who was getting up his kedge in order to haul out of range of the guns, no sooner heard the repeated plunges into the water, and could distinguish swimmers approaching his vessel, than he began to shout, "Boom af! *belieft et u?*—whoever you zall be! *Donder en blixem!* what fashion is dis to board 't vessel in by nagt? Boom af, eens voor al; or ik zall myn donderbos fire!"

Bolívar, who was by this time assisted by Sepúlveda in supporting his old servant, found leisure to answer, "*Somos amigos!*"

"*Vrienden zey je? Slapperloot!* call you it *vriendelyk'* to plunge blindelings off 't rocks, like zo many zee-honds; and to bring fright over an honest schipper and his maats?"

Then snatching a lantern from one of his men, he held it over the gunnel, and seeing Bolívar, exclaimed,—"*Duizend duivelen!* het is *'t kleintje kolonel*—zo will ik live!—and myn old vriend 't bottelier; whom they zal drown among them, if he have not goed luck."

As the droguer's boat lay alongside, and her waist bulwarks were unshipped, the whole party found little difficulty in climbing on board; where they stood dripping with wet, and staring on each other, as uncertain what to do next. Bolívar immediately took his resolution, on seeing torches appear on the bastion they had just left. He ordered the schipper to cut his cable instantly, and to haul alongside of the man-of-war, before they were perceived by the enemy on the ramparts; assuring him that his drogner would otherwise be sunk by the guns of the fort. But Lodewyk, whom it was not so easy to put out of his way, had a very strong objection both to cutting and slipping; and observed, that it would be a difficult matter to get another *kellic*, now that no hopes remained of being able to land at the port

" *Hé de kinderen!* look at 't pier. Zie you how 't mob is running about 't kaai met toortsen? They have begun 't plunderende already; and ik zal wonder if they burn not down 't waar-huisen before morning. You moet all lend a hand to get 't anker; and dan we zel zie about towing her away van 't kasteelen."

Unluckily for Sluiker, the royalist party, which had obtained possession of the castle, was so keen in their search after Bolívar, and his officers, whom they designed to have massacred, that they found the few soldiers who had been left behind on the North bastion. These they compelled, under the most dreadful denunciations of torture, to declare which way the governor had escaped. They consequently kept a sharp look out, from different parts of the ramparts; and no sooner had the schipper raised his usual cry of " Heave, met a will, ahoy!"

than a shot came from one of the long *piedréros* on the bastion, which struck the droguer's larboard bow, and travelled right through, passing out below her water-line on the other side.

Bolívar instantly drew his sabre, and cut the hawser without any more delay; while Lodewyk, who felt the jar when the shot struck, and had jumped down below to ascertain what damage it had done, thrust his head up through the hatchway, bawling lustily, "Get out 't sweeps, kinders—*om hémels wille!*—and lay her alongside 't man-of-war. *Slapperloot!* that twenty-four pound shot has made een lĕk, though welk 't zee-water pours faster as ever ik did zie though a gebroken dyk. Pull away, kinders! whilst ik zal make a shot-plug met myn jacket."

A few more shots followed the first; but merely cut away some of the standing rigging. The sailors, reinforced by the landsmen, who compensated in strength for their deficiencies in nautical skill, made such strenuous exertions, that they reached the man-of-war schooner, and scrambled aboard, just as the little droguer began to settle in the water and go down. The sentry on board the Tiburòn hailed, as soon as he heard the droguer's sweeps; and was answered by Bolívar with the night parole, which he had always been careful to communicate to the men-of-war lying in the harbour, in anticipation of some such emergency as the present. He was therefore immediately recognised; and preparations were made to receive him, The captain, a creole of Barcelona, who had been promoted from a small coasting vessel to his present command, got under weigh by the governor's directions. Having swept out of the harbour, he hove to, until day-light should enable him to reconnoitre the port and castle.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SCHOONER.—REVOLUTION.—SURRENDER.

> "— vainly sought for near and far,
> "A victim to atone the war,
> "A willing victim, now attends,
> "Nor craves thy grace but for his friends.
> "I, only I, can ward their fate,—
> "God grant the ransom come not late!"
>
> *Lady of the Lake.*

As soon as the morning breeze blew fresh enough to ensure a vessel against missing stays, the Tiburòn schooner stood in to the harbour's mouth, under Venezuelan colours. The moment she was seen from the castle to be rounding the point, the Spanish flag was hoisted on the north bastion, and the royalist war-cry was distinctly heard from the throng that lined the ramparts. The gun-boats had evidently been surprised the preceding night, and had changed masters; for the red and yellow colours of Spain were flying at the mast-heads.

Bolívar saw enough to convince him of the impossibility of attempting anything for the relief of the castle : he therefore gave the captain of the schooner directions to wear and stand out to sea again. While he was executing this manœuvre, and just as the Tiburòn turned her stern towards the inner harbour, a flash was seen to issue from the nearest gun-boat, followed by a dense volume of white smoke, which rolled forward over the surface of the water, like mist before the breeze. Before the report of the heavy gun was heard, a shot spun past the schooner, bounding along the waves, so close as to throw the spray on her deck.

" By 't jumping Jonas ! dat was wel gemeend !" exclaimed Sluiker, forgetting his personal danger in the excitement of the moment ; " Kyk out, kinders ! you zall zie another closer aboard us directly."

The words had scarcely been uttered, when the other gun-boats followed the example of their commodore, and with far more fatal aim. Of the five shots, two went through the sails and rigging ; and the third carried away the jaws of the main gaft, which immediately swung loose by the halyards, disabling the mainsail for the time. The last struck the unfortunate creole captain, who was at that moment hanging over the lee quarter, overhauling the boom sheet, and dashed him overboard. He clung for a moment, with a convulsive grasp, to the rope he was holding ; and then, his gripe at once relaxing, he fell into the water, and was seen no more.

" *Daar* !" again cried Heinrich ; " *Ik zeide zo.* Starboard 't helm, maat ! *lustig !* and keep her away. We zal be out of their bereik before they can load again."

As he had calculated, the Tiburòn made such rapid way through the water, that although it was not long before the gun-boats repeated their fire, all their shots dropped in her wake, without touching her. When she was once more outside the harbour, the ex-governor enquired of the seamen, who was the officer next in command to their late captain. He was informed, that the lieutenant and contramäestre, who were the only subalterns belonging to her, had received permission to go ashore the preceding evening, and had not returned on board previous to the surprise of the castle and the port. Bolívar therefore took upon himself the responsibility of appointing Lodewyk Sluiker as *comandante interino*, until the pleasure of the Junta Suprema should be ascertained on the subject. Lodewyk received his appointment, with many thanks for the honour done him; observing, at the same time, that "it was an ill wind that blew no man good: one shot had sunk his droguer, and another had made way for his promotion."

Like most seamen, Sluiker was a tolerably good carpenter. He therefore set himself to work with some tools, which he found on board the schooner, as soon as she was hove to; and in a few hours had the gaft mended, and ready for hoisting once more. Bolívar then directed him to take the schooner to La Guayra, as speedily as possible; expressing a hope that he might be able to arrive at Caraccas, before the news of the insurrection at Puerto Cavallo should have animated to revolt the fickle populace of the capital. He was assured, however, by the new captain of the Tiburòn, that no vessel, however well she might sail, could possibly beat up to that port, against both trade-wind and current, in less than a week.

Monteverde, meanwhile, had received intelligence from the traitorous adjutant Corbalàn, tht the castle of Puerto Cavallo was once more under the Spanish flag. He immediately marched his army thither by a circuitous route, by which he completely eluded the vigilance of the patriot general. The acquisition of this sea-port was of the greatest importance to the royalist army; for reinforcements, military stores, and provisions, were now received direct from Cartagéna by water, instead of being delayed for many weeks on a tedious and hazardous mountain road, through a tract of country in which they were always in danger of being waylaid and intercepted. The Spanish head quarters, being thus established in the centre of Venezuela, overawed the timid inhabitants, who had been for centuries accustomed to look up to their European rulers with the deepest submission and dread, and to reverence them as the legitimate representatives of regal authority. Monteverde's emissaries busied themselves in distributing proclamations, in which he called on the creoles to return to their allegiance. He promised a general amnesty to all those who should give in their adherence, before the entrance of the royalist troops into the capital; and denounced the extremes of military chastisement to all such as should dare to temporise, by delaying their submission until circumstances should have rendered the event of the struggle no longer doubtful. To this appalling threat was added the powerful influence of the friars, who openly denounced and excommunicated the patriots, as rebels, and as renegades from their holy faith ; refusing confession and absolution to all such as would not renounce their heretical and damnable principles.

The populace of Caraccas now rose *en masse*, and terrified the Junta Suprema, which was left but weakly guarded on the march of the army, into sending a deputation to Monteverde, to sue for pardon, and to place the republic at his disposal. Miranda received the news of this fatal measure, while he was falling back for the protection of the capital, which now renounced him, and refused to receive him within its walls. He soon perceived, from the effect which it produced on the army, that the cause of freedom was, (for the present at least,) lost to Venezuela. The greater part of his soldiers mutinied, and deserted to the royalists by entire battalions ; and many of his officers, on whom he had been in the habit of reposing the most unlimited confidence, fled to their estates, where they hoped, by submission and temporary retirement, to escape the impending storm. Many of Miranda's friends earnestly pressed him to follow their example ; but he persisted in standing, to the very last, the hazard of the die his own hand had thrown. As a stranger by birth to Venezuela, he was unwilling to burthen any native of that country with the dangerous responsibility of concealing him ; and he imprudently resolved to confide in the honour of the conqueror, by whom he confidently expected to be liberated on his parole.

He at length determined, for the sake of the faithful few who still continued to share his shattered fortunes, to propose a capitulation, while it was yet in his power, and, if possible, before his adversary should become acquainted with the strait to which he was reduced. Monteverde received the officer, who was sent to treat with him, in the most courteous manner. He lamented the unhappy differences in opinion, which had so long separated the inhabitants of Venezuela from their countrymen in Coro and Cartagéna; and expressed his sincere hope, that a new and better organised government would speedily be established in the colonies. At the same time, he studiously avoided all discussion of the terms he designed to grant; giving evasive replies when pressed on that head. He finally postponed his answer, until he should have entered Caraccas, whither he proceeded immediately at the head of his army, leaving a strong garrison for the security of Puerto Cavallo.

The greatest anxiety prevailed, meanwhile, on the part of the patriot army encamped near the village of Cucuiza, respecting the intentions of the Spanish general. Desertion continued to thin the troops; and still no definitive reply was received from Monteverde. Miranda found his army reduced to the mere skeleton of that with which he had opened the campaign. He therefore came to the resolution of disbanding it, and surrendering himself to the royalist commander-in-chief; in hopes of thereby averting from Venezuela, at whatever price, the horrors of a hopeless and protracted struggle.

He ordered the small remnant of his army to be formed, for the last time, in a hollow square; and addressed his troops in a short farewell harangue, in which he highly extolled their unshaken devotion to the cause of their country. He thanked them, in plain but feeling terms, for the fidelity and personal affection which they had evinced for him to the last; deeply regretting that any farther efforts on their parts would now be unavailing. He desired them, as the last mark of their obedience which would probably be exacted by him as their general, to pile arms, and disperse peaceably to their homes; advising them to take the earliest opportunity of exchanging the proscribed uniform they then wore, for the less ostentatious dress of private citizens.

The soldiers were deeply affected at parting with their respected chief, and those officers, whom a common cause, and a participation of hardships and dangers, had endeared to them. Some complied with Miranda's order, and sullenly laid down their muskets. But the greater part, who felt the fondness of soldiers for the warlike weapons, which they had borne through many a weary march and hard fought field, indignantly broke the stocks against the trees of the wood adjoining their bivouac; declaring that no Godo should have it to say, that they had surrendered their arms. Officers and men united in insisting, that the national colours, at least, should not be given up. As Miranda appeared at a loss how to dispose of them, the troops soon decided the question, by tearing them into shreds, which they distributed among themselves as relics; vowing to wear them concealed next to their rosaries, until they might display them, at some future day of meeting, under more favourable circumstances.

All the officers signified their desire of accompanying Miranda to Caraccas; but he requested them, as well for his own sake as for theirs, not to insist on showing him this hazardous mark of respect. He assured them, that it could only tend to exasperate the royalists, and would, in all probability, awaken Monteverde's jealousy; thereby disposing him to impose still harder terms than might otherwise perhaps be obtained. They reluctantly acquiesced in the prudence of his resolution; and, having selected a few of his oldest staff-officers to attend him, he bid the rest affectionately farewell, and took the road to Caraccas.

As he reached the summit of the hill, which overlooked the valley of Cucüiza, he looked back on the spot where the rude huts of his late encampment stood; and a tear of bitter mortification stole down his cheek, on seeing the small parties of his faithful warriors, which were separating in different directions towards their native villages. He sighed deeply to think how those veterans, who had acquired in the camp the habit of depending entirely on their officers for their daily rations, and were totally unaccustomed to provide for themselves, would be compelled to trust to the casual hospitality of the peasantry, who were by no means well inclined towards them, for their subsistence on the road.

A few leagues from Cucüiza, he met with a Spanish picket of cavalry, which had been stationed there, rather for the purpose of watching the movements of the patriots, than from any apprehension of danger to be dreaded from their diminished force. The commanding officer, who had lately arrived from Spain in the last reinforcements, turned out his guard as soon as he heard the name of Miranda; and received him with the military honours due to his rank. In answer to the patriot general's enquiry, whether he could be permitted to proceed to Caraccas, for the purpose of soliciting an interview with Monteverde, the Spaniard replied, that he had received no instructions on that head. He said, however, that he would immediately despatch a dragoon to head-quarters, with intelligence of his approach, and that meanwhile the general was perfectly at liberty to continue his journey.

He experienced a far different reception, from his own countrymen, on reaching the capital. The officer on guard at the gate, a creole who had deserted from the patriot army, affected to consider Miranda as his prisoner; and ordered him into a close and crowded guard-room, where he and his staff remained exposed to the gaze of the soldiers, until the return of a messenger sent to enquire how he was to be treated. One of Monteverde's aides-de-camp arrived soon after, with aninvitati on for him and his officers to visit the Spanish commander-in-chief at the palace, which had been so far repaired, since the earthquake, as to be rendered habitable. He also apologised slightly for Miranda's detention, saying that his general had been so much occupied by important arrangements, since his arrival at the capital, that he had not found leisure to give the necessary orders for his reception.

On entering the Plaza, Miranda found a crowd assembled to witness an execution that had just taken place; and saw the bodies of five unfortunate victims to the disturbed state of the country, hanging on a *cadahalso*, which was erected opposite to the windows of the palace. He could distinctly see, that they wore the green uniform of patriot officers; and the aid-de-camp observed, pointing to them, "Insurgents, who have been detected endeavouring to conceal themselves."

The attention of the populace was drawn to the palace gate, by the trumpet of the guard which saluted Miranda; for he still wore the insignia of his rank. The mob immediately recognised their old general; but "no one bid God bless him." On the contrary, the fickle Caracqueños, who had not long since greeted him, on that very spot, with enthusiastic acclaim, now pursued him with hooting and execration; shouting loudly, that they might be heard within the palace, "*A la horca con el rebelde mayor!*"

When Monteverde was apprised that his once formidable opponent had arrived, and requested an interview, he at once refused to see him, until he should have taken the opinion of his council as to his reception. At the same time, he directed apartments to be provided for him in the palace;

but ordered the officers, who had accompanied him, to be conducted under close arrest to the Guardia de Prevencion. On the following day, Miranda was called before the Consejo de Guerra, and required to answer, why he should not be tried as a rebel to his sovereign. Without attempting to argue the question of treason, which he readily perceived would be fruitless before his present judges, he pleaded the proclamation promulgated by Monteverde when at Puerto Cavallo; on the faith of which, he declared, he had now come forward to avail himself of the amnesty promised therein. The council, however, decided that, by his tardiness in deferring his submission until the Spanish army had entered Caraccas, he had forfeited all claim to the king's indulgence.

He then appealed to Monteverde himself, as a witness that he had sent a deputy to treat for terms of surrender, a considerable time previous to his obtaining possession of the capital. Against this it was urged, as an excuse for violating the faith which his judges had never designed to hold sacred, that by having disbanded his army, instead of keeping it together for the purpose of surrendering it, he had infringed the treaty into which he had entered; and that, by a fresh overt act of rebellion, in persisting to exercise authority, as if in lawful command of an armed force, he had again rendered himself amenable to martial law.

Monteverde, however, either felt compunction for the harshness with which his counsellors appeared disposed to treat a fallen enemy, or, as is not improbable, was unwilling to subject himself to the odium he would doubtless incur, by exercising unnecessary severity towards a man so much beloved by the respectable part of the community. He took a middle course, by refusing to sanction his trial before a military court in the colonies; urging the difficulty that would inevitably be found, in obtaining, a cool and impartial decision, while men's minds were still under the influence of the violent spirit of party, which had so recently distracted the land. But he intimated his intention of sending him to Spain, together with some of the principal actors in the late scenes of the revolution, to be placed at his catholic majesty's disposal. He concluded, by ordering him to be confined in a separate cell of the casas-matas at La Guayra, until an opportunity should offer of a vessel bound to Europe. This was expected speedily to be the case; as important dispatches, relative to the fortunate conclusion of the war, were in readiness to be sent to Cadiz.

Miranda bowed to the decision of the Spanish general, although he was well aware that death, or perpetual imprisonment, would be his fate in Spain; and solicited permission for his staff to occupy the same cell as himself. This request was peremptorily refused; and it was even hinted, that those officers would probably be tried at Caraccas, as the result of a court-martial on them would be of comparatively trifling importance.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE PATRIOT MAN-OF-WAR.—BOLIVAR DISGUISED.—CARACCAS.

Far he fled—indignant fled
  The pageant of his country's shame,
While every tear her children shed
  Fell on his soul, like drops of flame;
And as a lover hails the dawn
  Of a first smile, so welcom'd he
The sparkle of the first sword drawn
  For vengeance and for liberty!

The Fire-Worshippers.

The Tiburòn, meanwhile, beat up along the coast, towards the seaport nearest to the capital; but, although Sluiker carried all the canvas he could crowd on her, it was evident that her progress by the land was very tedious. Nothing could equal Bolívar's impatience, when, as the vessel stood in towards the shore, early in the morning succeeding each calm night, he could recognise the very points of land which she had left on the preceding evening. He paced the deck almost uninterruptedly, alternately looking out through the spy-glass for the high blue land about Caraccas, and angrily remarking to Lodewyk, that the schooner formerly bore the reputation of being a good sailer, but that, since she had been under his charge, she scarcely appeared to make any way through the water.

The schipper usually sat smoking his cigar on the tafferal, with imperturbable gravity; and seldom thought it necessary to make any reply to these ebullitions of impatience. When hard pressed by the clamours of his weary passengers, he would answer them with a Curazao proverb, which to them at least was oracular, and consequently unanswerable.

“ *Met slördig wind, en lywaard stroomen,*
“ *Zal de droguer te rugge komen.*”

At length, on the eighth morning after leaving Puerto Cavallo, they made the harbour of La Guayra; and to their great mortification, (although they were in some degree prepared to expect it,) they saw the Spanish colours flying on the castles. As it was, of course, impossible to have any communication with the shore, Bolívar enquired of the captain if he was acquainted with any obscure port in the neighbourhood, into which they might run unobserved, and endeavour to obtain intelligence of the fate of the army, and the situation of affairs in the interior. Lodewyk mentioned Los Bagres, as a creek with which he was best acquainted, in which a vessel was little liable to attract the attention of the inhabitants; for they were in habits of frequent intercourse with free traders of all nations. He accordingly received directions to proceed thither immediately.

During the passage, Bolívar disclosed to Don Carlos his intention of penetrating into the interior of Venezuela in disguise, that he might thereby be enabled to form a more correct opinion of the actual state of the country, for the purpose of deciding what was most expedient to be done, than if he trusted to intelligence obtained by any other means. At Sepúlveda's earnest request, he was permitted to accompany Bolívar, who also gave Sluiker directions to stand out to sea, after obtaining water and provisions, and to cruise in the offing for twenty-four hours, at the expiration of which time be was to return and send a boat for them. But, if they did not appear by the second morning, he was to conclude they were taken by the enemy, and was to bear up for the island of Margarita. The old servant Felipe was directed to deliver over to the patriot governor, at Pampatar, a case containing money and important papers belonging to the state; which Bolívar had caused to be embarked on board the schooner, the day previous to the loss of the castle at Puerto Cavallo, with the intention of sending it for safety to Caraccas.

The Tiburòn having anchored in the creek of Los Bagres late in the evening, Bolívar and his young companion proceeded to disguise themselves as muleteers, by exchanging different articles of clothing with the seamen. When it was quite dark, Lodewyk set them ashore at a short distance above the village, and they succeeded in gaining the open country unobserved. There was little danger of detection, when once they were landed; so completely was their appearance altered, by the coarse dark ruanas which they wore, over blue woollen drawers of the mountaineer cut. As for their complexion, a soldier's face rarely stands in need of any artificial stain to embrown it; and, although they could not boast of the long plaited locks of hair, which form the muleteers' chief pride, their broad palm-leaf sombreros were slouched over their foreheads, so as to conceal the deficiency.

They had taken the precaution to furnish themselves with halters, before leaving the schooner; and soon caught themselves horses, which they mounted *en pelo*. They then galloped rapidly across the savanna of Cañaveràl, and reached the ravine of the Tucúqueri just before day break. Having concealed their horses among the culegüi canes, which afforded both shelter and pasture, they walked into Caraccas early in the morning; but, judging it prudent to wait until the streets began to fill, lest suspicion might be excited by their being seen wandering about at that hour, they entered a posada in the outskirts of the city. Here they mingled in a crowd of muleteers and peons, who were seated on the sheepskins that had served them for beds, under the corridor of the house; smoking their churumbélas, and watching with evident satisfaction the progress made by their beasts, in eating the maiz and chopped straw, which was spread before them on undressed cow-hides.

Bolívar demanded breakfast for himself and his companion; and was ushered by the landlord of the posada into a large room full of arriéros, who were seated on benches round a long table, discussing huge slices of boiled tazajo with plantains, which they occasionally washed down with copious draughts of chicha. A black female cook, rather scantily dressed, set before the travellers their allowance of the substantial fare, which appeared to be so much in request; presenting the pieces of dried beef, smoking from the embers on which they had been broiled, on a large wooden spit, which she stuck in the earthen floor behind them; and rolling from her apron on the table about a dozen large plantains, roasted and slightly bruised. Their host, who ruled without a rival in the department of the cellarage, placed a large calabash of fermented cane juice on the ground behind them, and filled two capacious horns, first drinking to the health of his guests. He then seated himself near them, and proceeded to question them, (by virtue of his undisputed privilege as landlord,) as to whence they came, and whither they were bound. As had been previously concerted between them, Bolívar said, that they had just come up from the plantation of San Miguel, near Vitoria, with a drove of mules laden with cacao; and that they purposed returning the next day.

"I know that plantation well," said the landlord: "It used to belong to the Bolívars of Aràgoa, but I suppose it has fallen into the hands of Government; if it be true, as report says, that Colonel Simòn was killed at Puerto Cavallo, when his rascally troops rose and delivered up the castle."

"True, or false," said an old arriéro, who sat opposite, "the estate will go to Monteverde; never fear! More is the pity, I say, to hear every day of the oldest families in Venezuela dying off, and making room for a swarm of hungry strangers, who come over from Spain *capi-rótos*, and return *peti-metres*."

"Softly, tahita Capacho!" said the landlord; "speak reverently of the powers that be. Remember that '*boca cerrada no coge moscas*.' I will have no politics talked in my posada. Were the alcalde to hear of it, he would soon send me an order to shut up the house."

"Why we are all arriéros here, are we not?" asked Capacho, who had been partaking rather too freely of the potent chicha de caña: "Besides, there is no treason in saying that I like my own countrymen better than foreigners. But as you say, caséro! there is little use in speaking one's mind in these times, and perhaps too much danger. As I passed through the Plaza, late last night, I saw peons at work erecting the cadahalso, just in the place where it used to stand; and, by all accounts, this Monteverde is the very man to find the verdúgo employment."

Bolívar took advantage of the old man's talkative humour, to enquire what news was stirring in the capital.

"Bad enough, compañero! Besides those *corta-pescuezos* who used to be here in garrison, and would neither let man nor woman walk the streets in peace, there has arrived a fresh importation of Spanish jail-birds, who swagger about the city as if the land were their own, and every one they meet their born slave. They have begun plundering the paysanos from the country, too, already; but they had better take care, or many of them will soon be taught the length of the Cerrános' knives. No longer ago than last night, as I was coming home from the *cancha de bolas*, one of the new-comers, with a sabre dangling after him as long as my bridle-reins, was looking about for mischief. Seeing my compadre Goyo riding beside me, with a bota of aguardiente hanging at his saddle, he took it from him; threatening to cut him down if he said a word. Goyo looked about, and saw that there was not a Christian in the street, besides ourselves and the Spaniard. He quietly unbuckled his off-stirrup, which was a true Cerráno's, of heavy brass, and swinging it like a laso over his head, struck the Godo, who was too busy drinking to mind what he was about, one blow on the head, and no more. He went down like a bullock: Goyo picked up his bota; and we rode off, without waiting to see whether he recovered or not."[41]

"But Miranda and his army"—said Bolívar; "where are they now?"

"Hum! the army has melted away like the snows on the Cordilléra in summer; and no one knows where Miranda is. Some say he intends to surrender: but if he does, he will surely either be shot, or sent over to Spain. But here I sit talking, while I ought to be looking to my mules. Casero! let us have the *copa del estrívo;* I am for the vallies this morning."

The arriéros now began to load their mules, and to separate in different directions. Bolívar and Sepúlveda, having satisfied their host, walked out towards the Plaza; where they saw, by the guard which surrounded a newly-erected scaffold, that an execution was about to take place. They endeavoured to retire, but were ordered back by a cordon of Spanish sentries, stationed across the corners of the square, whose orders were to keep all those who were already in the Plaza from leaving it. This they effected, by freely applying the butts of their muskets, and the points of their bayonets, to all such as had the misfortune to be driven too close to them by the throng.

The hum of the multitude was suddenly hushed, by the shrill notes of a warning trumpet, blown at the gate of the Guardia de Prevencion ; and a solitary muffled drum was heard beating the dead march, as the procession slowly approached. The crowd made way before the escort, which advanced in close column with fixed bayonets ; and Bolívar saw five of his former companions in arms, between the ranks, heavily ironed and attended by friars, moving with pallid cheeks, but firm footsteps, towards an ignominious death ;—if that which the guiltless and brave die can ever be so termed.

When they had ascended the scaffold, and before they were delivered over to the executioner, silence was proclaimed. The Juez Fiscal read with a loud voice the sentence of the court-martial, and a proclamation issued by Monteverde, offering a reward for the heads of several chiefs in the late insurgent army, who were therein specified. Bolívar's blood boiled within him, on hearing his own name, among many others of the best and bravest in the land, denounced as that of a traitor and outlaw. He was more than once on the point of answering with his scornful defiance ; but reflection convinced him, that by so doing he would only give one triumph more to his enemies.

Secretly resolving to exact ample and severe atonement for the insult, on some future opportunity, he smothered his resentment, and awaited in silence the completion of the barbarous sentence. When the executioner advanced to perform his task, Bolívar involuntarily turned away his eyes; and, in a few moments, a suppressed murmur, which ran through the populace, announced that all was over. The escort retired, and the sentries were withdrawn, leaving the passage once more free. The two seeming arriéros were hurrying from the scene of death, so different from that in which a soldier ought to meet his fate, when they unexpectedly met Miranda and his companions, entering the Plaza with one of Monteverde's aides-de-camp.

Bolivar watched anxiously for one glance of recognition, as his general passed; but he appeared too deeply absorbed in the contemplation of his country's blighted hopes, to observe those around him. When he disappeared under the arched gateway of the palace, Bolívar said in a low voice to Sepúlveda, "Then all is lost indeed! and we may now retire from this land of tyrants and slaves, until some favourable opportunity shall enable us once more to raise our battle cry, of *Libertad, ó Muerte!* For my own part, I leave neither relation nor friend behind to lament my absence; but you have a mother, camarada! Let us endeavour to take her with us to Margarita."

They found that the small house behind the Alameda, which Doña Gertrúdes occupied, had risen afresh from its ruins; few days sufficing, under the cloudless skies and scorching sun of a Tropical climate, to convert the rubbish of fallen walls into sun-baked bricks. The son's eyes soon caught sight of his mother, seated under the shade of a tamarind tree, and fortunately unaccompanied, except by a faithful old black slave, who sat at her feet, spinning with the old-fashioned *huzo de hilar*. Don Carlos requested his companion to wait for him a few moments at the gate; and entering the garden, beckoned to old Máma Panchíta, who had been the nurse of his infancy. She rose and came towards him, at first slowly as if in doubt; but when she clearly distinguished his features, she quickened her pace, and caught him in her aged arms. Doña Gertrúdes saw the action, and knew there was but one human being, who could have so transported her old servant beyond the bounds of her decorous demeanour. "My son!" she cried; and Carlos, springing forward, folded his mother in his embrace.

For a while, the hearts of both were too full for conversation; at length Doña Gertrúdes exclaimed, "What could tempt you to venture here, my dearest Carlos? Fervently as I have prayed to behold you once more, heaven knows I would not have wished to buy even that blessing at so great an hazard to yourself. Surely you cannot mean to remain at Caraccas in that disguise?"

"No longer, my dear mother, than until this evening," answered Sepúlveda; "when you must accompany me to the coast. But here comes one, who has a much better head to contrive the means of our escape, than I can boast of."

Bolívar, who was tired of waiting, and guessed that the recognition must have been already effected, now came forward.

"Voto á Dios! amigo Carlos," said he, "I shall never choose you for a masquerading companion at Carnestolendas, if you desert your friends after this fashion. Excuse me, Doña Gertrúdes, but your son totally forgot that he had left me standing at your garden gate. If I had remained there until he recollected me, some officious neighbours might have taken me before the alcalde, on suspicion of a design on your fruit trees. But come, amigo! we must retire to our posada, and prepare for our departure. It would inevitably create suspicion, were two arriéros to be seen visiting at ladies' houses; and I know the vigilance of the Spanish police, too well to wish for any farther acquaintance with it. Your mother goes with us this evening of course?"

"Pardon me, Don Simòn! I fear I am too old for such a journey. I should only embarrass you both, and very possibly endanger your detection. Besides, how can I leave my brother Gabriàno? He has been proscribed by Monteverde, in consequence of having been appointed chaplain to the Junta; and is concealed in the hut of one of his friend Miranda's slaves, near the Quinta of Girasol. Máma Panchita carries him provisions every night; and should we desert him,"—

"My dear Doña Gertrúdes!" interrupted Bolívar, "I am too stanch a patriot to leave the widow of a worthy friend whom my father esteemed, and the mother of a comrade, in the power of the Godos. As for Don Gabriàno, it shall be our business to find him out, and persuade him to accompany us. Who knows how soon I may require his services as an army chaplain? for I assuredly mean to return before long, and to expel these invaders from Venezuela. Sepúlveda and I can easily procure mules for the whole party, and attend you on the road with less danger of suspicion, under our assumed character. So keep up your spirits until the evening, and be not surprised; should you see three arriéros at your garden gate instead of two."

Carlos once more embraced his mother; and having received from her the necessary directions for finding his uncle, he and his companion took the road to Girasòl. They found, with some difficulty, the hut that was the object of their search, half way up the ravine that overlooked the Quinta. It was so completely concealed from view, by the spreading leaves of the plantains under which it was built, that its gray thatched roof alone was visible, and might have easily been mistaken, at a short distance, for one of the mis-shapen granite rocks that lined the edges of the mountain stream. The mistress of the hut, a middle-aged zamba, was making *cazáda* cakes before the door, surrounded by children of all ages. She glanced a jealous eye at the two strangers; and, on their enquiring for the Señor Capellan Gabriàno, doggedly denied all knowledge of such a person; assuming, at the same time, that stolid expression of countenance, so peculiar to her countrywomen, when they either cannot or do not choose to answer a question.

No sooner, however, had they made themselves known, than her features brightened, and she expressed the greatest satisfaction at seeing any friends of the "pobre Señor Clerico," who, she feared, must be tired to death of his solitary way of life. One of her little daughters, by her orders, immediately led the way up the ravine, to show them his place of concealment. The child bounded lightly from rock to rock, before the two young men, who could hardly keep pace with her; and pointing to a spreading caöba, whose branches reached the ground on every side, exclaimed "*Alli 'sta mi amo Don Gabriàno!*"

The chaplain was seated on a moss-grown stone, in the shade, puffing his cigarillo, and whiling away the time with the perusal of Ercilla's Araücána. His friends could hardly have recognised him through his disguise, which was similar to that worn by both of them, had it not been for his clerical tonsure, and venerable white locks; his sombrero being thrown aside on account of the heat. He started up, on seeing two strangers, but was reassured by hearing his nephew's voice; and shook hands with them both, laughing heartily at their uncouth appearance, and evidently unconscious at the moment that he himself looked even more grotesque. Bolívar lost no time in communicating his plan for their escape to Margarita; and mentioned having seen Miranda already in the power of his enemies, as an additional motive for counselling a temporary retirement from Venezuela. Don Gabriàno thoroughly approved of his proposal, and informed them that he had three mules, one of them a baggage *macho,* tied up in the bush, not far from the cottage; so that his sister and himself were provided for.

"But her faithful old negress must not be left behind," said he; "and she will hardly be able to walk so far. How shall we contrive to convey her?"

Sepúlveda immediately expressed his readiness to carry Máma Panchíta behind him, *en ancas*; and they parted, having agreed to rendezvous in the Alameda at night-fall. When Bolívar and his companion reached their posada, the landlord received them with energetic encomiums on a famous olla podrida, which had been prepared since morning for his guests' dinner. The sable Hebe of the inn placed before them a smoking mess of that savoury compound; and the young men, whose appetites were sharpened by their long walk, played their part so like genuine arriéros, that all suspicions of their real quality, had any such arisen, would doubtless have been dispelled. After dinner, Bolívar purchased from the host two Cerráno saddles, and a sillon, under pretence of executing a commission for his friends in the country; and placing them on their heads, *al arriéro,* the two friends returned to the Quebráda del Tucúqueri.

By the time they had saddled their horses, which had apparently fed undisturbed since morning, it was full time to repair to the appointed place of meeting. Bolívar held the horses, under the poplar trees at the lower end of the Alaméda, which was as yet but little frequented as a promenade, since the return of the Spaniards to Caraccas. Sepúlveda walked to his mother's garden, where he found his uncle Gabriáno, and the negro who owned the cottage at Girasòl, busied loading the baggage mule, with Doña Gertrúdes' trunks and almofrez. The whole party mounted in silence; Máma Panchita finding some comfort, amidst her terrors of emigration, in the unlooked for honour of riding behind her young master. Being joined by Bolívar, who undertook to lead the macho, they reached the open country without the slightest interruption.

By riding fast during the whole night, without resting or deviating from the road, they reached the wood, bordering the creek of Los Bagres, just before sunrise. Lodewyk Sluiker, who was seated in his boat waiting for them, had already given up all expectation of seeing them that morning; and was preparing to return on board. On seeing the two females muffled up in cloaks, he cried, "*Myn hémel!* Ik zeide to myn-zelf,—when ik zaw you two jonkeren mad to get aan land,—ach! it is not *vaderland's-liefde* alone dat tempts them to run such a perykel."

But when he caught a glimpse of Máma Chepíta's hands, while Sepúlveda was assisting her to dismount, he exclaimed, with unfeigned astonishment, "*Donder! een zwart vrouw!* as ik zall answer."

Then shrugging up his shoulders, and looking peculiarly arch and cunning, he bustled about to get his passengers and their luggage into the boat; familiarly calling on Don Gabriàno to lend him a hand, as he never suspected him to be any other than a Cerráno peon. The chaplain's sombrero having accidentally fallen off, as he stepped into the boat, his tonsure caught the schipper's eye; and drew from him the muttered exclamation of "*Slapperloot!* here is een priester in 't mommerey!"

Sluiker was now completely mystified. He uttered not another syllable, but steered the boat in silence; staring alternately at Máma Panchíta and the chaplain, until they reached the Tiburòn. When they had sufficiently enjoyed his perplexity, Sepulveda took him aside, and explained to him who the new passengers were, whose appearance had so much puzzled him. Bolívar then directed him to make sail; and in a few minutes the schooner was on her way for Pampatar in the island of Margarita.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE CRUISE.—THE CHASE.—THE CAPTURE.

Oh, who can tell, save he whose heart hath tried,
And danced in triumph o'er the waters wide,
The exulting sense—the pulse's maddening play,
That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way.—
She walks the waters like a thing of life,
And seems to dare the elements to strife.
Who would not brave the battle-fire—the wreck—
To move the monarch of her peopled deck.

The Corsair.

On anchoring in the rocky harbour of Pampatar, the Tiburòn was surrounded by innumerable canoes and piraguas, bringing off patriots, who were eager to enquire the news she was supposed to have brought from the Main. They had as yet only heard an imperfect report of the royalists having entered Caraccas, by a small vessel which had left La Guayra on the Spaniards taking possession of it, and had touched at Margarita, for provisions, on her way to Trinidad. The governor of the island, Don Jose Arizmendi, on hearing that Colonel Bolívar had arrived, sent his barge to invite him and his party to the Government-house, where they were hospitably received; and Dona Gertrúdes was put in possession of a suite of apartments, commanding a view of the Boca del Sirpiente, and the opposite coast of Cumanà.

Shortly after their arrival, it was determined, in a consultation held by the two chiefs, that the Tiburòn should be immediately fitted out, for the purpose of cruising against the Spanish flag among the West Indian islands; and that Bolívar, with a sufficient sum of money from the Government chest, should be landed at Santo Domingo, to purchase arms and accoutrements, and, if possible, to enlist volunteers, by means of whom a fresh army might be formed to renew the struggle for independence. To give some semblance of authority to their proceedings, Arizmendi and Bolívar formed themselves into a Junta Provisional, into which they admitted Colonel Santiago Marino; and a seal was engraved, in close imitation of that employed by the late Venezuelan Government. Troops were raised, with the greatest facility, for the defence of the island, among the hardy inhabitants, half smugglers, half fishermen, who, to a reckless daring and love of adventure, added a thorough hatred and contempt for the Spanish Government, by which their contraband trade had been often severely noticed. The dismantled fortifications were also repaired and manned, in confident hopes that the patriot troops, which were now scattered over the face of Venezuela, would speedily rally round the "*bandera tricolòr*;" as soon as they should learn that it was again displayed.

Powder and shot were embarked for the Tiburôn's guns; and a sufficient number of seamen were soon shipped, not only for her complement, but also to man the prizes she was expected to make. A party of newly raised troops having been sent on board as marines, Sepúlveda requested and obtained command of them. Don Gabriáno, too, resolved to accompany the expedition as chaplain; for he already began to foresee, from the experience of a few days' residence at the Government-house, that any longer stay on the island, with no other society than that of a few illiterate officers, could not fail to be very irksome. A cabin was accordingly fitted up, with every attention to his comfort, next to that of his nephew; and, having taken an affectionate leave of his sister, whom he recommended to the care of the governor's lady, he embarked, to the great delight of the Margaritaños on board. Lodewyk Sluiker, who had obtained a regular commission, as captain, from the Junta Provisional, and had received on board several officers to act under his orders, speedily recovered his usual good humour, which had been rather ruffled by the unlucky shot that sunk his droguer. He looked forward, with the greatest glee, to the prospect of a cruise; boasting of his accurate knowledge of every creek and corner among the islands; and confidently predicting success, from the novel circumstance of having a "*kapellaan*" on board.

Every thing being ready for sea, and the last raft of casks received from the watering place, the anchor was soon run up to the bows; and the Tiburòn stood out of the harbour, firing and receiving a farewell salute.

"*Hé de, kinders!*" cried Lodewyk, as the smoke from the last gun curled upwards in a light blue circle; "Three cheers for a lucky cruise! *Hoe slimmer de schelm hoe grooter de geluk!*"

The trade-wind being completely in their favour, they made Santo Domingo in three days from their moorings at Pampatar, and landed Bolívar near San Luis. Sluiker's experience, as pilot, now proved of essential service. He carried the schooner in safety through the intricate channel to the Northward of Cuba; and having passed the Anguilla shoal, commenced cruising off the point of Matanzas, in hopes of intercepting some homeward-bound Spanish merchant-man from the Havàna.

It will readily be believed, that Sepúlveda had not been so long on terms of daily intercourse with his schipper, without finding an opportunity to make enquiries respecting his former passengers in the droguer. Lodewyk began to entertain great kindness for his young marine officer, whose assistance he found exceedingly useful in drilling his sailors in general to the management of the guns, and the boarders, in particular, to the use of the cutlass and pistol. He was therefore highly pleased to find that Sepúlveda was acquainted with Maria del Rosario; and, as Don Carlos could not dissemble the deep interest he felt for her welfare, Sluiker, who did not want for penetration, and whose rugged exterior concealed a kind heart, soon comprehended how the case stood. Sepúlveda now left the cabin regularly every evening, much to the surprise and chagrin of his uncle, for the purpose of accompanying the schipper during the first watch. While Don Gabriáno was wondering at his bad taste in selecting such a companion, his nephew was listening with interested attention to the schipper's repeated details of the droguer's trip to Saint Thomas's, and of her being intercepted and plundered by pirates.

"*Ach, myn hémel!*" Lodewyk would exclaim; "What a *schrik* it did bring over me, lest they should search 't cabin and find myn jung passagier. *Lieflyk juffrouw!* she cared no more as nothing for the loss of 't gĕldkist; and did all she could think to comfort her vader. But he was *razende dol*, when 't zee-roovers sailed away met his doubloons. He fell ziek met fever de zelfde nacht, and ik tênk he is dead since. But never care for that, myn vriend! If we have 't geluk to make a prize, we zal take her into Santo Tomas, and sell her cargo to 't Deensche; for they are neutral, and will buy of all vlags. You zall then have a chance to see 't juffrauw once more."

After a fortnight's cruise, during which the recruits became tolerably expert at the guns and small arms, the Tiburòn was running along the land, one evening, between Las Matanzas and the Havána, when the *gabiero*, on the look out at the mast head, proclaimed the welcome intelligence of a sail in sight, standing out of the harbour. The eyes of all on board were eagerly turned in the direction pointed out by the man aloft; and Sluiker, seizing a spy-glass, ran nimbly up the fore-rigging to obtain a better view of the stranger. The sun was just sinking abreast of the Morro rock; and some few of the sailors, whose eyes were strong, could just catch an indistinct glimpse of a vessel, directly in the broad glare of sun-set. When the dazzling orb had disappeared below the horizon, a three-masted vessel was plainly made out, crossing the Tiburòn's course, and standing to the Northward for the Baháma passage.

"*Hoo-see!*" exclaimed Lodewyk in an extasy; "She carries sky-sails over royals; and is certainly *een groot koopvaardar* bound to Cadiz. Jibe 't mainsail, kinders! and keep her head Noordwest. If Hans Spaansch gets into 't strength of 't golf-stroom before we cut him off, we may *toefluiten* our chance of *prys-gēld*."

He then came down on deck, and bestirred himself with unusual alacrity, to get the square fore-sail set. This increased the schooner's walk so much, that when he had seen the ropes coiled down, and every man at his station, Lodewyk beckoned Sepúlveda, and pointing to the foam, as it danced rapidly past over the deep blue waves, remarked that the schooner was doing her duty, and that he should shortly call on the marines to do theirs. The guns had already been loaded, and the gunner's crew was busy taking out the tompions and priming; while, under Sepúlveda's directions, the small-arm men were mustered on the quarter-deck to prepare their muskets. When every thing was in readiness, the word was passed fore and aft, for all hands to lie down at their quarters; and a dead silence prevailed, interrupted occasionally by Sluiker's hoarse voice, as he issued brief directions to the helmsman.

Don Gabriàno, meanwhile, who was totally unused to scenes which appeared to threaten so much personal danger as the present, sat on the companion; casting wistful looks from time to time at Lodewyk and Sepúlveda, as they paced silently up and down the weather side of the deck. At length, overcome by his apprehensions, which became every moment more importunate, he called his nephew, and asked him in a scarcely audible whisper, where the chaplain was usually stationed during an engagement:—"Because," said he, "if my presence is not particularly required on deck, I believe I shall be most useful in the cabin, where I can be in readiness to confess undisturbed the unfortunate men, who will doubtless be mortally wounded in the approaching conflict."

Sepúlveda tranquilised him by the assurance that, far from being wanted on deck, he would only be in the sailors' way; and requested him to retire below as soon as he thought proper. There was no necessity for repeating this welcome intimation. Immediately on receiving it, the worthy chaplain embraced his nephew affectionately, entreating him to take care of himself, and to run no needless risks; and then disappeared down the companion ladder, with a celerity that bore witness to the reality of his alarm.

The brief twilight of the Tropics had long since faded away; but the moon shone with such brilliancy of splendour, that the white sails of the chase were distinctly visible, broad on the bow. Sluiker anxiously reconnoitred her, from time to time, through a night-glass; and as often expressed to Sepúlveda his apprehension, that she would reach the Gulf-stream, while the Tiburòn was still in the counter current of the shoals. At last, however, he announced that she had taken in her *flying-kites*, and stripped to her top-gallant sails; as the cautious Spaniards generally do soon after dark. The schooner then rapidly gained on her, and her painted ports could occasionally be seen, as she rose on a swell, and exposed her glistening broadside to the rays of the moon. A few minutes more, and the Tiburòn was within a cable's length of her quarter: so still, meanwhile, was every thing around, that the dash of the waves against her broad bows was distinctly heard.

Sluiker now ordered the square-sail to be taken in; the fore and main-sails to be brailed up; and the gunner's crew to cast loose and point the long gun, which was mounted on a circle a-midships. Although the sailors executed these manœuvres with all possible stillness, and even held their breath in the intense earnestness of expectation, some slight noise was unavoidably made, which caught the attention of the watch on board the Spanish vessel. A voice immediately hailed through a speaking trumpet,—"*Ho! la go-le-ta!—Que bu-que?*"

Sluiker returned no answer, but looked along the gun, and blew the match which he had taken in hand. There was evidently some bustle and confusion on board the strange ship. Several voices spoke at once, as if giving orders; and Lodewyk heard cartridges called for in Spanish.

"Keep her away, een half point!" said he to the helmsman; "Ik zal cut her tiller-ropes *daadelyk*."

The captain of the merchant-man hailed once more, and threatened to fire into the schooner, if she did not immediately answer. "Viva Venezuela!" exclaimed Sepúlveda; and "Viva la Patria!" shouted his men; springing up simultaneously, and standing to their guns. Sluiker at the same moment applied his match to the touch-hole of the long gun, just as it pointed towards the ship's rudder; and, while the report still thundered along the wide waters, the chase was seen to shoot up into the wind. Chance had so far favoured the schipper, that he actually cut away her wheel-ropes, as he had previously threatened between jest and earnest.

"Hurrah!" cried Sluiker; "Give her 't weather-guns, kinders, zo soon as you zal zie her stern turned towards you. Luff, maat! and follow her; or we zal get on her beam directly."

The six carronades, composing the Tiburòn's broad-side, were fired just as the ship's sails began to shiver in the wind. The guns were pointed too high to hull her, but some of her running gear was evidently cut; for Lodewyk, who watched her manœuvres with a practised seaman's eye, saw that her crew were attempting to box her off, but that they could not succeed in bracing the yards round. She then began to gather stern-way. Sluiker was prepared for it, and handled the schooner so cleverly, that the ship made a stern-board to leeward of her; receiving on her way, a charge of round and grape from the long gun, and the whole of the larboard broadside.

Not a shot was fired all this time from the Spanish ship; and it was evident, from the confusion that prevailed on board her, that she was not prepared for fighting, and had not calculated on the probability of meeting an enemy in this part of the West Indies. After some hesitation and clamour, and just as Lodewyk was again training his long gun on her, lanterns were shown in her gang-way; and the Spanish captain hailed to say he had surrendered.

Sluiker now laid the schooner close abreast of her; and hailed her in an authoritative manner, desiring a boat to be sent him forthwith. This order being promptly complied with, he detained the men who came in the boat; and sent Sepúlveda in her, with a party of marines, to take possession of the prize. He also ordered a prize-master on board, with a picked crew; and gave him directions to shorten sail to the ship's topsails, reeve fresh tiller ropes; and heave to for the remainder of the night. His own boat was then hoisted out, and he went on board the stranger, accompanied by the chaplain; for, as soon as Don Gabriàno was certified that there was no farther danger, he volunteered to confess such of the enemy as might stand in need of his good offices, as none of his own flock were so circumstanced as to require them.

The prize proved to be the Avistruz, bound to Cadiz, with tobacco and other produce of the Havána. She had also on board what was far more germain to the matter, in the eyes of her captors;—a very considerable sum in dollars and bullion, consigned to different Spanish merchants. The importance of the capture astonished Sluiker; and converted his usual thoughtless gaiety into a serious steadiness of demeanour. As soon as he had secured the ship's papers, and ascertained beyond a doubt that she was a lawful prize, he confined half the prisoners under hatches; and employed the remainder, together with his own men, to get the ship's pinnace off the booms, and launch her over the side. He then commenced loading the boats with cases of treasure, and transferring it to the schooner, accompanying every trip in person; so that, before morning, nothing but bales of merchandise and provisions remained on board the Avistruz.

It was fortunate for the captors, that he made such expedition. As soon as day broke, and the sea-fog dispersed sufficiently for surrounding objects to be distinguished, Lodewyk found, to his great consternation, that the Gulf-stream had set both vessels so far to the Northward, that the Bahāma bank was in sight under their lee, and a low uninhabited island, covered with mangroves, was within a cable's length of the prize. Every possible exertion was made to save the ship, by making sail and towing; but all was in vain, for the morning breeze was so light, that she took the ground and bilged, shortly after the danger was discovered. The Tiburòn, drawing less water by half, had not drifted so far with the current; and, as she could make use of the sweeps, with which she was provided, in case of necessity, she ran no risk whatever. She was therefore enabled to stay by the wreck; and to save as much valuable merchandise as she could stow.

Lodewyk then sent back the Spanish prisoners, whom he had taken out of the prize; and advised the captain, at parting, to send his boat for assistance to the island of Baháma, which was within sight, assuring him that he would be in perfect safety, if he chose to remain by the ship, until pilot-boats came out, and assisted to save the remainder of the cargo. Having seen the crew of the Avistruz safely landed on the islet,—which, like the rest of that group, abounded with turtle,—and having supplied them with fuel, fresh water, and provisions, the Tiburòn made sail for Saint Thomas's, for the purpose of selling the prize goods she had on board; Sluiker designing to proceed from thence to the island of Margarita, after watering, and refreshing the ship's company.

CHAPTER XXV.

AN AGED SUITOR.—EXPLANATION.—RESOLUTION.

" Young Jamie lo'ed me weel, and ask'd me for his bride,
" But saving a crown he had naething else beside ;
" To mak the crown a pound, my Jamie went to sea,
" And the crown and the pound were baith for me.
" He had na been gane but a year and a day,
" When my father he fell sick, and our cow was sto'en away ;
" My father urged me sair, and Jamie at the sea,
" And auld Robin Gray cam a courting to me."

Old Ballad.

Maria del Rosario, meanwhile, was far from being agreeably circumstanced on the plantation at Cãobas. She enjoyed no society whatever of her own sex, with the exception of Señora Jacinta; and the dueña, who had for many years governed with unrivalled despotism in her department as housekeeper, and was exceedingly jealous of her authority, could not from the first moment, without considerable uneasiness, see a young and interesting female daily seated at the head of her master's table.

Her forebodings were speedily verified; for the irresistible influence of proximity gradually became victorious over even Don Anselmo's insensibility. Instead of confining himself to the stately politeness with which he used at first to address his young guest, and hand her to and from her seat at table, he began to pay her closer attentions, such as could not be, and were not mistaken by any one, except herself, their unconscious object. The consequence was, that Señora Jacinta's malevolence daily increased. Although she dared not openly resent the injury, which she believed herself about to sustain, in being subjected to the caprices of a young mistress, she contrived fully to indemnify herself for this compulsory forbearance, by sullen looks, and indistinct ejaculations, in which she made it her prayer (rather needlessly perhaps) to be delivered from forwardness and coquetry. After a few attempts to appease her, although perfectly ignorant of the cause of her ill-temper, Maria del Rosario gave up the task in despair, and applied herself more closely than ever to her needle-work. This innocent employment, unluckily for her, confirmed all the dueña's suspicions. As her imagination was perpetually occupied with the idea of the approaching nuptials, which she considered certain, she firmly persuaded herself, that the novice was embroidering her wedding dress; and resolved never to forgive that which she could not but consider as a manifest triumph over her.

Máma Chepíta's visits, which were regularly paid every Sunday and holiday, formed Maria del

Rosario's chief amusement. Attended by the kind hearted negress, she used then to stroll about the woods which surrounded the plantation; or at times, seated under a spreading cāoba tree near the rivulet, she would hearken with delight to the banjies and vihuelas on the lawn in front of the huts, where the slaves were enjoying their evening dance. The little Frenchman too, Mons. Rodolfe, was always at her service for a walk, when on a visit at the house. He was no less delighted with the novice's naiveté, and eagerness for information, than she was instructed and amused by his lively conversation, and entertaining descriptions of France in general, and Paris in particular, as he remembered it in the happy times previous to the revolution.

She all at once became sensible of a change in his behaviour towards her, that surprised and afflicted her, as she concluded that she must have inadvertently given him some cause for displeasure. She observed, that he now no longer offered himself to attend her, with all the prompt gallantry of *la vielle cour;* nor exerted himself, as usual, to entertain her during their promenades. On the contrary, he now left it to her to propose an excursion, and sometimes framed an excuse for declining it; or, when unavoidable, accepted it with evident hesitation and embarrassment. While walking out with her, he was unusually silent, and constrained in his manner; and when they were joined by Don Anselmo, which frequently happened of late, Mons. Rodolfe anxiously took the first opportunity of resigning her hand, and pleaded some engagement, or business, as an apology for retiring. On these occasions, when she was left alone with Don Anselmo, the high-flown compliments, with which he used to address her, were a great source of amusement to the unsuspecting novice. She had not the most distant conception, that a man of his advanced age could entertain a serious idea of captivating her affection; and firmly believed that the flattering harangues, which proceeded so awkwardly from him, were merely designed in imitation of Mons. Rodolfe's former method of entertaining her.

After tasking her memory in a fruitless attempt to recollect anything she had either said or done, that might have given rise to her French *cortejo's* present coolness towards her, she determined to enquire of himself, at the first opportunity. She put her resolution in practice that same evening. Having proposed a walk in the garden, to which he agreed after some hesitation, she mentioned, without farther preface, the pleasure she had always taken in his conversation, and her fears that she had by some means unintentionally offended him.

Mons. Rodolfe had never felt more embarrassed, than by the novice's simplicity of manner, in thus seeking an explanation. He stammered some incoherent and disqualifying sentences, about the unmerited honour conferred on him, and the utter impossibility of his being in any way offended; and concluded by hinting, as delicately as he could, something about Spanish jealousy. She had, even now, no idea that he alluded to Don Anselmo; but supposing him to mean, that her father might be displeased at the frequency of their walks, she merely replied, that there was not the least cause for his apprehension.

On meeting her father soon after, she related the Frenchman's scruples, as an amusing instance of punctilio, in a man who had been always on terms of familiarity with them, since they first met at Las Cãobas. She was thunderstruck at hearing him answer, that Mons. Rodolfe acted with becoming prudence and circumspection, towards the intended bride of his friend. Don Beltràn also advised her to be more reserved in future; as any indiscretion on her part might displease Don Anselmo, who had all the sensitiveness of a Castilian Hidalgo. The truth suddenly flashed on her mind; and she stood, as if doubtful whether her ears had deceived her, gazing on her father with a look of such speechless agony, that he condescended to explain to her, that Don Anselmo had some time since offered himself as a suitor, and had been accepted by him in her name. He accounted for not having previously apprised her of this joyful event, (as he considered it), by saying that, as his mind had been made up on the subject from the beginning, he thought it superfluous to mention it, and was willing to give Don Anselmo all the advantage he might be expected to reap, from being the first to communicate so pleasing a proposal.

When Maria del Rosario recovered herself sufficiently to articulate, she threw herself into her father's arms, and implored him, by her mother's memory, not to sacrifice her to a man so utterly unsuited to her in age and manners. She assured him of her willingness to devote herself to his service; and entreated, if she had become a burthen to him, and he was determined to get rid of her, that he would at least permit her to retire to a convent, in the seclusion of which she would never cease to pray for his happiness, and that of her brother. Don Beltràn interrupted her, by enquiring whether she had forgot, that she no longer possessed the dowry necessary for a nun. He assured her, that she was but too happy, as a portionless girl, to have met with so advantageous an offer; and commanded her, on pain of his heavy displeasure, to receive Don Anselmo as an accepted suitor.

It was in vain that she reiterated her entreaties, and declared that their host was not only indifferent, but absolutely odious to her. Her father laughed at her remonstrances, as mere childish whims; and asked, with some scorn, what notions of preference the novice of a convent could possibly have, that should prevent her from accepting the hand of any suitor, not actually deformed, whom a parent thought proper to select as her husband. Then suddenly recollecting the offer Don Carlos Sepúlveda had formerly made, and forgetful that his daughter had not been made acquainted with the circumstance, he upbraided her with cherishing an affection for a lover whom he had rejected; reading her, at the same time, a severe lecture on the guilt of disobedience, and the folly of love matches. In this, however, he unadvisedly touched on a dangerous theme, and one of all others the most calculated to disconcert his plans for the projected alliance.

Maria del Rosario had long felt esteem and admiration for the son of her oldest and dearest friend, Doña Gertrúdes, even while she believed him to regard her with perfect indifference. But now that her father had disclosed the secret of Sepúlveda's attachment, her eyes were opened to a thousand instances, in which he had all but betrayed his love; and she learned how to account for his apparent coldness, which previously appeared to her as unkindness. So delightful was the discovery, that she almost pardoned, for its sake, the hateful discussion from which it had arisen. She no longer conceived herself called on, by maiden pride, to banish every thought connected with Carlos and her native land. She had heard that she was beloved, and by him, whom, could she have chosen, she would have selected from the whole world.

This would have been sufficient, of itself, to insure her rejection of all other offers, however splendid, and all other suitors, however fascinating. But, if she previously looked on Don Anselmo with dislike, she now regarded him with abhorrence; and internally resolved that nothing, short of actual force, should compel her to receive him for a husband. As surprise and agitation prevented her from answering her father, he interpreted her silence into submission to his will. He therefore took leave of her, repeating his injunctions, that she should treat her wealthy suitor with affability and gratitude.

No sooner had he left her, than she retired to the solitude of her own chamber; and abandoned herself to melancholy reflections on the distance that separated her from Doña Gertrúdes, the friend of her youth, to whom alone she felt that she could now look for advice and consolation. While she pondered on the world of waters, that lay between her and her native land, a thought suddenly struck her, that if Lodewyk Sluiker were again to visit the island, he might be prevailed on to assist her to escape over to the Main. She felt convinced that she might safely confide in him; and contemned as trifling, with true youthful ardour, all obstacles which would have appeared to her insuperable, but one short hour before. She was, in truth, completely changed from the timid inexperienced novice, to the no less gentle, but determined Venezuelan maiden, who first felt,

> " How all the other passions fleet to air,
> " As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,
> " And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy."

when once the heart thrills with the consciousness of mutual love.

Her resolution thus taken, she retired to rest, in pleasing anticipation of Máma Chepíta's weekly visit, which she expected to receive the following day. Never had time appeared to her to move so slowly, as during the hours intervening before her hostess's usual time of arrival. But, previous to the wished for meeting, a mortification awaited her, which had probably been accelerated by some explanation between her father and Don Anselmo. Her ancient suitor, having requested and obtained an interview, proceeded to declare his passion in a studied speech, to which she listened with distracted attention. Nevertheless, as he prided himself on his eloquence, so he entertained not the slightest doubt of his success; and attributing to bashfulness, and joyful surprize, the silence caused by contempt, and by comparisons which were anything but advantageous to him, he kissed her hand, as customary in similar cases, and strutted away on exceeding good terms with himself.

In the afternoon, Máma Chepíta appeared with her customary offering of a bouquet of flowers, from the negroes' market in the port; and Maria del Rosario, intimating that she had much to say to her in private, immediately proposed a walk, and led the way to their usual cool retreat beneath the great Cãoba tree; where Don Anselmo's gallantry had lately prompted him to order a rustic seat to be constructed.

After a long silence, during which the novice pulled to pieces the flowers she had just received, she briefly explained the unpleasant situation in which she stood; taking care, at the same time that she declared her unconquerable dislike to Don Anselmo, not even to hint at any preference she felt for another. She merely said, that as she had reason to apprehend violent measures on the part of her father, she had resolved to spare him and herself the pain of inflicting and submitting to restraint, by withdrawing herself privately from the island. She concluded, by entreating her old hostess to further her design of reaching Venezuela, where she said she had friends, who, she doubted not, would gladly receive and protect her.

Her determined tone astonished the negress, who had been accustomed to see her all timidity and submission to her father's will. She answered, with some hesitation, that her dear young lady was certainly the best judge of her own happiness; and that she was, at all events, rejoiced to hear her resolution against accepting Don Anselmo, whose former wife had died, to the best of her belief, of a broken heart. But, while she declared her readiness to assist her in any possible manner, she begged leave to enquire, how she proposed to cross the sea to the coast of Caraccas.

The novice satisfied her on that head, and Máma Chepíta agreed that Lodewyk, who was an old married man, with a family in Curazao, was trustworthy. There was also little doubt, judging from his good nature and disinterestedness, that he would readily give her a passage. She promised to make every enquiry, without loss of time, among the droguer masters in the port, where he was to be found; and to send her daughter Martha, the next evening, to acquaint her with the result. Maria del Rosario was now more at leisure, her mind being comparatively at ease, to listen to her hostess's domestic news and plans. She learned, with pleasure, that Máma Chepíta had made up, within a few dollars, the sum Don Anselmo demanded for her daughter; and she listened with interest to her resolution of leaving Santo Tomas, as soon as she had accomplished that dearest wish of her heart, and settling at Trinidad, "where she might be near poor Beños' grave."

The sound of the banjies was now heard on the slaves' lawn; and Máma Chepíta proposed to her young mistress to walk down, and look on for a while at the dance, for the purpose of diverting her mind from melancholy thoughts. When they reached a small guava copse, which skirted the lawn, they found that some extraordinary festivity was going on among the slaves. They had raised a sort of triumphal arch of bambus, covered with flowers of the scarlet fuchsia, geranium, and orange trees, under which was placed a table, spread with refreshments little inferior to those usually prepared for a *dignity ball*,[12] The negroes, in clean check shirts, and white cotton trowsers; and the negresses in chintz gowns, and Bandanna head-dresses; were dancing with wild glee, which burst from them in spontaneous peals of laughter, as each couple reached the bottom of the set.

Máma Chepíta called one of her acquaintance, who was passing near the spot where they stood concealed by the bushes, and enquired the meaning of this grand display.

"*Kih!* body,"—exclaimed the laughing negress, displaying a set of ivory teeth; "Massa Anselmo gib us feast to-night. Old man he gone crazy, ever since young Missy promise to be him second wife."

Maria del Rosario would hear no more. She turned, and hurried away from the scene of gaiety, which was now fully accounted for, shedding bitter tears of mortification; and took an abrupt leave of Máma Chepíta, who in vain attempted to console her; entreating, once more, that she would lose no time in enquiring for Lodewyk Sluiker.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE ARRIVAL.—THE INTERVIEW.—THE PLOT.

Hotspur, "By the Lord! our plot is as good a plot as ever was laid; our friends true and constant; a good plot, good friends, and full of expectation. We are prepared; I will set forward to-night.

King Henry 4th.

Mama Chepita was seated, after her return to her cottage, at the frugal supper her daughter Martha had provided for her; indulging in many sage innuendoes and reflections, without however mentioning names, on the happiness of their humble state, as contrasted with the misfortunes to which their superiors were exposed; when a well known voice was heard at the door, crying, "Holla! Máma Chepíta! *haus ahoy!*"

Martha having opened the door, Lodewyk Sluiker entered, accompanied by a young officer, whom he introduced as Don Carlos Sepúlveda; and seating himself, with as little ceremony as if he had left the cottage but that morning, enquired how his passengers were.

" Both well, Señor Ludovic ;" answered the negress ; " But,—ave Maria purisima ! what change is this ? Where is the droguer ? And why are you masquerading thus in an officer's capote ?"

" Masquerade, mother ? *slapperloot !* this is my every-day suit now. Ik verloor myn droguer, and found a vechting schooner in her stead. My name zal be no more plain Lodewyk, but Capitan Don Ludovico, *donder !*"

Then, lighting a long cigar, he proceeded to question Máma Chepíta more closely respecting his former lady passenger ; and Sepúlveda had the inexpressible satisfaction of hearing her relate the whole conversation she had held that very evening with Maria del Rosario. The negress would have faithfully concealed her young mistress's secret from any one else ; but Sluiker was the very person in whom the novice herself had resolved to place confidence. Therefore, in her surprise and joy, at seeing him thus unexpectedly, she not only mentioned Maria del Rosario's intention of flying to the Main, but also the pressing necessity that urged her to that determination. Sepúlveda could not avoid drawing a flattering conclusion in his own favour, from the novice's having resolved to seek the protection of her friends in Venezuela ; as he well knew she could only mean his mother.

His enquiries, respecting the plantation at which she was residing, were so minute, and his eagerness to visit it so evident, that Máma Chepíta must have been less sharp-sighted than she really was, if she had not some shrewd suspicion of the truth. In this she was confirmed by Sluiker's repeated exclamations, at any interesting passage in her narrative of "Heard you that myn vriend? We are just op 't time come. Ik altyd zeid that a kapellaan on board was lucky; and now, zie you! we may want him 't morgan."

The schipper then placed on the table a case-bottle of rum, which he had brought ashore under his boat-cloak; and desired the negress to procure materials for mixing a bowl of punch; declaring his intention of making himself comfortable for that night, at least. While Martha was absent on that errand, Sepúlveda, who had already made considerable progress in Máma Chepíta's good graces, easily obtained her consent to show him the road to Cäobas early in the morning; and to procure him, when there, an interview with Maria del Rosario. As Lodewyk persisted in his resolution of sitting up, and seeing his bottle out. Don Carlos wrapped himself in his capote, and lay down on the sofa, having first persuaded Máma Chepíta and her daughter to retire to rest.

At the first cock-crow, Sluiker, who had been zealously engaged all night in a fruitless attempt to quench his thirst, and on whom the copious libations had taken no more effect, than on the capacious bowl in which they had been compounded, awoke Sepúlveda according to promise; crying, "*Auf! auf! camarad;* show a leg, and save a clew! Turn voor turn is fair play; and it is high time voor you to be stirring, and voor me to lie down. But take a word of advice met you, myn jung vriend! Ween you see 't lady, never stand spreeking, but persuade her to come met you to

Máma Chepíta's cottage. We will have Don Gabriàno ready; and 't moment you are married, on board 't Tiburòn mit you, and to sea. But if you think to persuade her vader vrom his will,—*donder!* ik know 't man beter as you.—he zall lock up 't jungfrauw until 't schooner sails; and he zal marry her to 't oud planter, zo soon as your back is turned.

Having uttered this piece of sage advice, which Sepúlveda internally resolved literally to follow, he threw himself on the couch, and soon gave audible proofs of being in a sound sleep. Máma Chepíta then appeared, in readiness for a walk; and having previously presented to her guest the indispensable West Indian luxury of coffee, they set out together for the plantation.

When they reached the valley, it was broad daylight; and the slaves were swarming forth to their daily labour. To avoid their observation, Máma Chepíta hurried Sepúlveda off the path towards the Càoba tree, where she left him seated, while she went to apprize Doña Maria of his arrival. The novice, who had just risen, saw her from the viranda, in which she stood enjoying the morning breeze; and immediately descended to the garden, in expectation of hearing some intelligence about Sluiker's droguer. Words cannot express the unfeigned astonishment with which she listened to Máma Chepíta's communication. She had, at first, some scruples as to the propriety of meeting Don Carlos clandestinely; but the negress speedily removed them, by reminding her that she would be present, and assuring her that the young officer had brought her news of his mother, who, he said, was an old friend of hers. This last argument was unanswerable; and she accompanied Máma Chepíta to the Cäoba tree.

The interviews of lovers, although they are said to be highly interesting to the parties immediately concerned, are unfortunately the dullest of all possible subjects, when reduced to the matter-of-fact details of,—"said he," and, "she replied;" &c. It may therefore be sufficient to state, for the information of the reader, and the better understanding of the remaining pages, that the name of Doña Gertrùdes proved of the most essential service to her son, in furthering his suit. As Maria del Rosario had declared her resolution, previous to his arrival, of seeking that lady even as far as the Main, and of trusting herself in a small droguer, to the protection of one who was nearly a stranger to her, she could frame no excuse for retracting, now that the distance was comparatively trifling, the mode of conveyance commodious, and the escort, to say the least of it, more eligible. It is true, that Sepúlveda did not assail her, in direct terms, with the startling word *marriage;* but it is no less true, that he more than once reminded her,—it might be unnecessarily,—that his uncle was chaplain of the schooner, and would receive her as a daughter, at Máma Chepíta's cottage.

She finally consented, or rather ceased to object, to take a passage on board the Tiburòn to the island of Margarita; with this proviso, that she was that day to make one more attempt to mollify her father. Lest, however, she should find him deaf to her entreaties, and absolutely bent on sacrificing her to Don Anselmo, Sepúlveda obtained her permission to return, that night, for her final answer. Máma Chepíta was once more to be his guide, and to conduct him to the garden, from whence there was a winding stair-case, leading to the viranda. The negress then considered it necessary to warn them of the danger of discovery, if they prolonged their interview until the family in the house should be stirring; and they reluctantly parted, with mutual promises of punctuality to the appointed hour.

When Sepúlveda returned to the port, he found Lodewyk busily employed landing merchandize from the schooner; having already found a ready sale for the greater part of the prize goods. He scarcely found leisure to speak to Don Carlos; except to whisper his hopes that he had settled every thing to his satisfaction. The Danish governor, he said, had politely expressed a wish that the Tiburòn might sail that very night; as he was apprehensive of being embroiled with the Spanish authorities on the neighbouring island of Puerto Rico, on which Santo Tomas was often obliged to depend for provisions, during times of scarcity.

Sepúlveda then went on board, and found Don Gabriàno pacing the deck, in considerable alarm at his long absence. His nephew had acquainted him, the preceding evening, before he went on shore, that Don Beltràn and his daughter were on the island; and had hinted his intention of persuading her, if possible, to elope with him to Margarita. Sluiker too, on embarking in the morning, had informed him somewhat mischievously, that Don Carlos was gone a little distance into the country, to the plantation of a Godo, his rival; and the worthy chaplain's imagination had been haunted ever since, by fears of hearing that his nephew had fallen by the cuchillo of the jealous Spaniard. It was with heartfelt joy, therefore, that he embraced him, as he stepped on the gang-way. On being informed of the particulars of his project, he readily consented to unite him to the novice, that very night; protesting, at the same time, that he had *in general* a very strong objection to clandestine marriages, and to any thing savouring of disobedience in children. But *in this case*, he observed, where the parent was a declared traitor to his country, and the suitor, whom he wished to force on his daughter's acceptance, was a *Godo*, he certainly was of opinion, that she might conscientiously be assisted to escape from such tyranny.

His nephew then proposed to him to go ashore until the evening; for the ship was a scene of noise and confusion, with hoisting casks and bales out of the hold, and striking them into the lighters alongside. They therefore adjourned to Máma Chepita's cottage, where Stuiker promised to join them, as soon as the business with which he was engaged should be concluded. The day passed tediously with Sepúlveda; but evening at length arrived, and with it came Lodewyk, full of the good news he had to communicate concerning the handsome shares of prize-money that would be paid them on the capstan-head, the day of their arrival at Margarita.

Don Carlos then taking him aside, enquired whether he could advance him a sufficient sum from his share, to enable him to assist their worthy hostess in buying her daughter's freedom. Lodewyk immediately assented, and producing a large canvass bag from the breast pocket of his jacket, counted out doubloons to the required amount; taking a receipt, for the satisfaction of the Junta at Margarita, to whom he was responsible.

Máma Chepíta was called in, and presented by Sepúlveda with the money, in Doña Maria's name. The good negress was affected even to tears by this kindness, and struggled to kiss his hand; declaring that, notwithstanding her daughter's being free from Don Anselmo, she should still consider her the slave cf Don Carlos and Doña Maria, and would accompany Martha and them wherever they might go. Sepúlveda then urged her to set out immediately, and pay the money to Don Anselmo, as soon as possible, that there might be no unnecessary delay; for he advised her, knowing her design of removing to Trinidad, to take her passage in the schooner to Pampatar, from whence she might at any time reach the former island.

When she was gone to Cäobas, Lodewyk acquainted Sepúlveda with the precautions he had taken, to ensure the success of his enterprize. He had already hauled the Tiburòn out to the mouth of the harbour, where she was lying at single anchor; and had given directions to his lieutenant to get under weigh at dusk. When clear of the rocks, he was to heave to, and send a boat ashore with a steady coxswain, to the small bathing place at the back of the fort. From thence, two picked men of the boat's crew were to come to Máma Chepíta's cottage, which he had already pointed out to them.

"Met those two lads," said Sluiker, "and our two zelves, we zal battle 't watch met half a score 't aud planter's slaaven, if they zal dare to attack us. And besides, you zall want them to carry 't jungfrauw's *zak en pak*."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE ELOPEMENT.—THE MARRIAGE.

"I long woo'd your daughter, my suit you denied;
"Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide,—
"She is won! we are gone over bank, bush, and scaur;
"They 'll have fleet steeds that follow!"—said young
Lochinvar.

Marmion.

THE sailors, two stout Margaritaños, were punctual to their appointed time; and came armed, by Sluiker's order, with such *garrótes* as their countrymen use, in climbing their native mountains. Lodewyk gave each of them a dram out of his flask, by way of encouragement; and having lighted his cigar, ordered them to follow him and Don Carlos in silence. Then, shaking hands with the chaplain, he desired him to "stand by met 't *mass-buck*, for he should find it useful bevoor gun-fire in 't *morgen*."

The moon was of no small advantage to them, while traversing the hilly part of the road; as it enabled them to avoid the prickly-pear bushes, which would otherwise have rendered the track impassable. But, when they approached the plantation, the danger of discovery was so much augmented, that Sepùlveda led Lodewyk and his sailors off the direct path, and proposed to conceal them at the Cãoba tree, while he himself went to the garden. He was, however, unexpectedly met by Máma Chepíta, who informed him that she had paid the price demanded for her daughter, and that Doña Maria had desired her to thank him, in her name, for his kind attention.

Her young mistress, she said, was exceedingly unhappy, in consequence of an interview she had that day with her father. He had treated her with unusual harshness, and had commanded her to prepare to marry Don Anselmo the following day; assuring her that the chaplain of the estate, Fray Bernardo, had agreed to celebrate the ceremony, if she proved refractory, without her consent; on his representation, that his only wish was to promote the happiness of his disobedient and self-willed daughter.

Máma Chepíta, had already brought to the place of rendezvous such article of dress and ornaments as Doña Maria wished to take with her; and she desired Don Carlos and his friends to remain at the tree, while she went alone to conduct her young mistress to him. After a short delay, she returned hastily with Doña Maria, who threw herself, almost fainting, into Sepúlveda's arms for protection; exclaiming that they were pursued by some person, who had watched them as they left the garden. Don Carlos spread his capòte about her, and entreated her to take courage, for no one should harm her, nor tear her from him; and Lodewyk, looking out among the trees, cried,—"*Duizend duivelen!*—here is mynheer 't planter himself!"

Don Anselmo advanced, exclaiming in a voice almost inarticulate with rage,—"Fine Doings, Señorita de Peñuela! Your father shall be informed of these moonlight excursions. Where have you hid yourself? and where is that vile *negra tercéra*, who has dared to encourage you in such unseemly conduct?"

Just as he said these last words, he issued from the guava copse, and unexpectedly found himself confronted, face to face, by Lodewyk Sluiker, whose weather-beaten features, half concealed by bushy black whiskers, had a formidable appearance at any time; but seen thus by moonlight, and in so solitary a place, were capable of terrifying a stouter heart than that of the old planter. Don Anselmo's knees knocked against each other, and he was on the point of falling to the ground in his extreme trepidation; when Lodewyk, apprehensive that he would call for assistance from the negros' huts, as soon as he should recover his presence of mind, suddenly threw his boat-cloak over his head, lifted him on his shoulders, as if he had been an infant, and set off with him through the wood at a rapid rate.

Sepúlveda, seeing that Maria del Rosario was rendered almost incapable of walking, through terror and agitation, followed Sluiker's example, by raising his lovely prize in his arms; and was guided by the sound of the schipper's footsteps, until he overtook him at the ascent of the ravine. Here Lodewyk set his terrified captive down; and threatening to kidnap him altogether, and sell him to the patriots in Margarita, if he uttered a syllable, proceeded to tie him hand and foot, with pieces of rope, which the sailors had brought in expectation of having trunks to carry to the boat. He then gagged him, and laid him down close to the path, under the bambus; assuring Don Carlos, in answer to his remonstrances against rough usage, that it was absolutely necessary, to prevent him from alarming the whole coast. He consoled the unlucky planter, on taking leave of him, by observing, that a night's rest in the fresh air would be of service, as a specific, to cool his blood; and that his slaves were sure to find him, when they passed that way to their work next morning.

Maria del Rosario had by this time recovered herself sufficiently to walk unassisted; and the whole party proceeded, as rapidly as the nature of the path would permit, until they reached Máma Chepíta's cottage. Martha was seated outside, in the moonlight; and immediately on seeing them descending the hill by the side of the rivulet, she sprang forward to embrace her young mistress, and to thank her for her freedom.

While Máma Chepíta was busied, with the assistance of the sailors, in packing up and carrying to the boat some few articles, which she considered of too much value to be left behind, Sepúlveda led Maria del Rosario to his uncle, and entreated him to unite them without farther delay. The novice would fain have remonstrated against this haste; and proposed to defer the ceremony until their arrival in Margarita; but honest Lodewyk urged the danger of pursuit from the harbour, if the schooner should unluckily be becalmed in the offing. In that case, he said, he could not answer it to the

Danish governor, if a fugitive daughter was to be found on board; although it would be a totally different case, were it an obedient wife, whose duty it would then be to follow her husband.

As Don Gabriano expressed himself of the same opinion, she consented to give Sepúlveda a right to protect her; and Lodewyk, after giving her away, exclaimed,—"Always zal ik zey, dat '*slordig is 't wind, dat goed to nieman brengt*!' Ik zoud be een droguer-schipper this day, but vor 't loss of Puerto Cavallo; and you, *myn hartje!* een Non, but vor 't Earthquake of Caraccas."

NOTES.

Horatio. I knew you must be edified by the margent
before you had done.

Hamlet.

NOTES

TO THE

EARTHQUAKE OF CARACCAS.

NOTE 1, p. 3.

The signature affixed by the King of Spain to all official documents, is invariably "*Yo El Rey;*" without any reference to the name of the reigning monarch. No wonder, then, that his *vasallos Indios* believed him to be *the* king, *par excellence*, of the whole world.

NOTE 2, p. 9.

It is difficult to conceive how the South American friars, who triumphantly refer to this miracle, as a proof of one saint at least having been produced in the colonies, can reconcile it to their belief in Pontifical infallibility. This inconsistency, however, is not more extraordinary than the unblushing effrontery, with which the Dominican guardians of Santo Rosa's chapel at Lima exhibit, among other relics of the patroness of Peru, a pair of *dice;* profanely asserting that Our Saviour deigned repeatedly to entertain the sainted nun with them, for the purpose of recreating her when wearied by devotion and penance.

NOTE 3, p. 10.

The *cancha de gallos*, or cock-pit, long rivalled, and has at length totally superseded, the more chivalrous (if not less cruel) exercise of the bull-ring in South America.

Many old creoles deeply lament this falling off; and assert that the use of the *punal* and *cuchillo*, now so prevalent among them, has become more general in consequence of the young men's degeneracy in this respect

Note 4, p. 11.

The game of *briscàn* is the "*all-fours*," that of *tenderéte* the "*beggar-my-neighbour*," of South America.

Note 5, p. 13.

A *pulpería* is a colonial grocer's store, in which liquors are sold, in addition to the various articles dealt in by European tradesmen of that class. A *bodegòn* is more decidedly a Spanish establishment; it is a cook's shop and boarding-house.

Note 6, p. 17.

Two *escuchas*,—literally *listeners*,—are appointed weekly in every convent. Their duty is, to attend by turns at the grate of the *locutorio*, where they must hearken to, and repeat to the Abbess, all conversations that take place, between the nuns or novices, and their visitors.

Note 7, p. 18.

All European Spaniards were known in South America by the *soubriquet* of *Godos*, or *Goths*, in allusion as well to their Gothic descent, as to the barbarous and overwhelming devastation, with which they appeared to delight in laying waste the finest country in the world. The same name was, subsequently to the revolution, used indiscriminately to designate all royalists, whether Spaniards or Criollos.

Note 8, p. 25.

The *Alamo*, or Lombardy poplar, grows to a stupendous size in South America; emulating the native cedars, wherever it has been introduced, in height and thickness.

This tree has given the name of *Alaméda* to most promenades in the neighbourhood of cities; as they are usually ornamented with rows of it.

Note 9, p. 25.

The *vihuéla*, or *típle*, is a species of small guitar, in general use among the peasantry of the colonies. It is frequently constructed of the half of an oval gourd, with a cedar sound-board.

Note 10, p. 30.

The Cachirì Indians, most of whom are mountaineers, are reputed the most noble tribe in Venezuela; (called by them Coquibacóa.) They are also the most warlike of the existing aborigines; and are much respected by the Guagívis, Caríbis, and other rival tribes. Bolívar's favorite rallying cry, in battle, was—"*Firmes, Cachiríes!*"

Note 11, p. 30.

The *ruána*, (called also, in various parts of the country, *poncho*, *manta*, and *frezada*,) is a square cloak, without sleeves, having a hole in the centre for the wearer's head. It is made either of wool or cotton, and is usually dyed black; but it is sometimes worn white, or, as in Peru and Chile, striped with various brilliant colours.

Note 12, p. 32.

The *coca* leaf resembles that of the citron in shape and colour. It has the property of enabling those who chew it, to undergo violent and long-continued exertion, with little or no other sustenance. The mountain Indians constantly use it, when on their toilsome journey over the Cordilléra, where provisions are not to be procured, nor can be conveniently carried. It is chewed with lime made from shells, and with ashes of the *molle* root.

Note 13, p. 32.

The *morciégalo*, or large bat of South America, is exceedingly destructive to cattle, and sometimes to human beings, when sleeping in an exposed situation. It repeatedly happened, during the campaigns of the revolution, that the greater part of the horses belonging to an army were so copiously bled during one night, as to be incapable of marching for several days:—many of them even dying on the spot, in consequence of excessive phlebotomy.

NOTE 14, p. 35.

The *Chinganéros* are a peculiar race of wandering Criole minstrels, whose habits, and even whose appellation, strikingly resemble those of the *Zinganées*, or Eastern gypsies. They claim for themselves pure Indian descent; but this is denied by the aborigines. They are all good dancers and musicians; and, above all, fortune-tellers, supposed sorcerers, and *improvisatori*.

NOTE 15, p. 35.

The following is an imitation of "La Montonéra," as the author heard it sung by a Chinganéra, on the Alameda of Santiago de Chíle, in the summer of 1826. The minstrel was well known, in that capital, by the name of "La Monóna," from the title of one of her favourite songs:—

"A Montonéra's life I lead!
 "I'll ne'er disown the name;
"Though village maids and city dames
 "May lightly hold our fame.
"From Buenos Ayres' boundless plain
 "The Montonéra comes;
"And o'er the mighty Andes' heights
 "In liberty she roams.

"What hand e'er tried in empty space
 "To arrest the morning star?
"The Montonéra's freeborn mind
 "To enslave is harder far.

" Free, o'er the Cordilléra's peaks,
" The lordly Condor stalks;
" As freely, through her native wilds,
" The Montonéra walks."

Note 16, p. 36.

Annexed is a translation of the " dispedída," or farewell serenade, which was formerly, and probably is still, a favorite at Bogotà and Popayàn.

When Raymond unwillingly turned to depart,
And to leave fair Eliza, the girl of his heart,
She cried, while her voice was impeded by woe;
" Wilt thou ever forget me? Ah no, Raymond no!

" If passion alone can true passion repay,—
" If none ever loved thee as I have,—Ah! say
" Canst thou e'er to Eliza ingratitude show?
" Wilt thou ever forget me? Ah no, Raymond, no!"

The youth dried her tears, as he faltered " Adieu!"
And in agony cried, as he rushed from her view;—
" Forget what thou wilt, but my love and my woe!
" Can Eliza forget her fond Raymond? Ah no!"

NOTE 17, p. 37.

" La Zambullidóra," of which the following is a loose translation, is the name of a favorite South American dance, to which the *Chinganéras* of Venezuela were much in the habit of adapting extemporaneous verses:—

" Youth! this magic ring receive
" The Chinganéra's fairy spell;
" Swift the city ramparts leave,
" Nor heed the wakeful centinel.
" Come! beloved of my soul,—
" To the depths of ocean fly;
" Where the dark blue billows roll,
" Fearless plunge, nor fear to die.

"To the wild savanna fly!
"Empty pomp of cities scorning;
"There, beneath the vault of sky,
"Rest in safety till the morning.
"Come! beloved of my soul,—
"To the sands of ocean come;
"There no sounds shall meet thine ear,
"Save curlew's pipe, or bittern's drum.

"Hark! the wakening earthquake's cry
"Echoes on the startled ear;
"To the city ramparts fly
"Youth! for death awaits thee here.
"Come! beloved of my soul,—
"Fly we to the desert waste,
"There, where the lake's blue waters roll,
"A fairy pen by wizards placed,
"Lies for thee to write a scroll
"Such as * Motenzúma traced."

---

* Motenzúma, or rather *Mohtenzúma*, is the Indian, and probably the correct method of pronouncing the name of the unfortunate Mexican monarch.

NOTE 18, p. 38.

A favorite Venezuelan tonadilla contains the following verses, among many that are full of the genuine South American imagery.

"En là Cordilléra llueve;
"En el mar está tronando;—
"Entre mar ý Cordilléra
"Mi amor esta penando!"

(IMITATED.)

"On the Andes pours the rain;
"O'er the sea the thunders roll;—
"'Twixt the mountains and the main
"Pines the mistress of my soul."

Note 19, p. 70.

Cogote-raspádo is a term of ridicule applied to friars; in allusion to the close manner in which the nape of their neck is always shaved.

Note 20, p. 70.

A monk's *coróna* is the patch shaved, in imitation of baldness, on the *crown* of the head: the *corquillo* is the circular border of hair, left undisturbed by the tonsure, between the *coróna* and the *cogóte*.

"Que le pide la nina al frayle ?
"Que le pide, ý no quiere darle ?"
"La *coróna*, ý se le da."
"Y como queda este frayle ?"
"Desbarbádo, *descerquilládo*,
"*Descoronádo*, ý sin cordòn !"

Note 21, p. 71.

A *tambo* is an Indian caravanserāi, built in many parts of South America, (more particularly in the Cordillera,) in which no shelter would otherwise be within a traveller's reach. Each tambo is kept in repair by the neighbouring natives; and is provided, from time to time, with fuel, straw or rushes for beds, earthen ollas for cooking, and dried venison or vicuna's flesh.

Note 22, p. 74.

Chicha, the favorite Indian strong drink, and universal beverage from California to Patagonia, is made of various materials; sugar-cane, mäíz, aracácha, grapes, apples, &c.

Note 23, p. 79.

A *quebráda* is a deep ravine on the side of a mountain, affording a passage to the violent torrents which descend from the Cordillera during the rainy months. Quebrádas, in the dry season, contain at most a scanty rivulet; and are so completely overgrown by the rapid and luxurious Tropical vegetation, as to afford excellent shelter to travellers during the mid-day heat. They are, however, usually the lurking places of various wild animals; and abound in poisonous reptiles of every description.

Note 24, p. 79.

Many tribes of Indians bury their dead beneath the huts in which they die; and daily, for some time subsequent to the funeral, bring to the grave provisions; which are, of course, devoured by monkies and wild dogs. As they believe that their deceased friend makes the grave his temporary abode, previous to taking his departure for the island of spirits, they tie a piece of twisted hide or grass rope to the body, on laying it in the earth, and pull it occasionally, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the defunct be still there. When the rope decays and easily comes away, they cease to mourn, believing their friend to be finally departed to enjoy a state of happiness; and again return to inhabit the hut, being no longer under apprehensions of being haunted by his ghost.

Note 25, p. 94.

Tasájo, or *buccan*, (called also *charqui* on the coast of the Pacific) is the flesh of bullocks, deer, vicunas, and sometimes hogs, cut into long strips resembling ribbons, and dried in the sun. The Buccaneers took their appellation from their original peaceful employment of drying beef, in this manner, on the coast of Tierra Firme. They subsequently commenced that predatory life, which has associated in our ideas the name of a *Buccaneer*, (once synonimous with that of a herds-man) with every thing rapacious and atrocious.

Note 26, p. 96.

Caöba is the Indian name for the mahogany tree.

Note 27, p. 106.

Small trading vessels are known, in the West Indies, by the name of *droguers*.

Note 28, p. 115.

Petácas are a sort of square travelling trunks, or rather boxes, made with detached lids, which close over, and completely cover the bottom parts. They are cut out of raw bull's hide, and are sewed with thongs of the same.

Note 29, p. 132.

On all occasions of public mourning or alarm, as defeats, insurrections, earthquakes, and conflagrations, the church and convent bells are tolled in an irregular peal, called *plegária*, which sounds most dismally, especially when heard by night.

Note 30, p. 139.

An occultation of a star, (by the moon,) is a phenomenon universally believed in South America, even among the upper classes of society, to portend some approaching revolution. Under the Spanish Government, it was supposed to predict the death or disgrace of a viceroy.

Note 31, p. 159.

Escúdos and *pesétas* are provincial terms; the former for gold two-dollar pieces, and the latter for quarter dollars, which are also sometimes called *pistereens*. Dollars, called in Spanish *pesos*, are known by the name of *patacóns* in many parts of Southern Colombia, as at Citarà and Nóvita.

Note 32, p. 172.

This satirical song, levelled chiefly against the superstitions and encroachments of the monks, was one of the first "signs of the times" immediately preceding the revolution in Venezuela; when the timid creoles first ventured openly to express their opinions on matters connected with Church and State.

Note 33, p. 182.

Churumbéla is one of the numerous provincial names for a tobacco pipe; which is also called *congolo*, *mulo*, *cachimbo*, &c. in different parts of South America.

Note 34, p. 183.

The grass, in many extensive tracts in the savannas, is so high, that a horseman, although mounted on a tall charger, can only see the plume of his comrades' schacos at a few paces distance. It is also nearly as thick as Indian corn; and opposes a considerable impediment to the march of an army, and the charge of cavalry.

Note 35, p. 187.

It occurred in many instances, during the revolutionary war in South America, and more especially in the city of Popayan, that the patriot troops, when defeated, and in full retreat before the Spaniards, were insulted by the triumphant ringing of bells from all the monasteries. The notes of the organs, too, and the loud chanting of "*Jubilate Deo!*" were distinctly heard, as they passed the convent chapels. On such occasions, it was extremely difficult to restrain the soldiers from taking summary revenge for such ill-timed demonstrations of rejoicing; and they frequently, when unobserved by their officers, used to fire a shot or two at the lattice work of the belfries, which generally had the effect of driving down the lay-sisters who were ringing.

Note 36, p. 200.

The scent of this drug is abhorred in the West Indies, as being always perceived in houses where a sick person's life is despaired of; for it is the *ultimo recurso* of colonial doctors, in cases of yellow fever.

NOTE 37, p. 211.

The *disciplína*, or *scourge*, is an essential appendage to the monastic habit; but is usually worn in convents rather as a symbol of penance, than an actual instrument of self-chastisement. Devotees, on the contrary, generally wear it girt round their loins in serious earnest; and, as it is frequently furnished with small knobs of steel or silver, armed with sharp points, like diminutive spur-rowels, its application is no jesting matter.

NOTE 38, p. 232.

Bolívar's frown, when he was agitated by one of those bursts of passion to which he was subject; used to wrinkle his high forehead into furrows, of that peculiar *horse-shoe* form, described as the brand of the Redgauntlet family.

" And where his frown of hatred darkly fell,
" Hope withering fled—and Mercy sigh'd farewell!"

NOTE 39, p. 236.

Chicha de pina, cider made of pine-apples, a common beverage in many parts of South America.

NOTE 40, p. 246.

" Mas vale ser Montonéra,
" Que no Porteno ladron!"

NOTE 41, p. 271.

This anecdote is related, word for word, as it was communicated to the author by an old Huazo of Chile, who exulted in having himself performed the feat.

NOTE 42, p. 303.

A ball given by the free people of colour is called in the West Indies, *par excellence*, a *dignity ball*. The most expensive refreshments are provided on the occasion; and more ceremony is usually observed among the sable revellers, than is to be seen in an entertainment at the Government-house.

END OF VOL. II.

BIBLIOBAZAAR

The essential book market!

Did you know that you can get any of our titles in our trademark **EasyRead**™ print format? **EasyRead**™ provides readers with a larger than average typeface, for a reading experience that's easier on the eyes.

Did you know that we have an ever-growing collection of books in many languages?

Order online:
www.bibliobazaar.com

Or to exclusively browse our **EasyRead**™ collection:
www.bibliogrande.com

At BiblioBazaar, we aim to make knowledge more accessible by making thousands of titles available to you – quickly and affordably.

Contact us:
BiblioBazaar
PO Box 21206
Charleston, SC 29413

Made in the USA
Coppell, TX
12 September 2020

37358938R00187

S0-DUT-425

BIBLIOBAZAAR

9 780559 368530